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MAD MAN

OF

THE MOUNTAIN.

MAD MAN

OF

THE MOUNTAIN.

A TALE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY HENRY SUMMERSETT,

AUTHOR OF PROBABLE INCIDENTS, &c.

" Whither are fled the charms of vernal grace,
" And joy's wild gleams that lighten'd o'er thy face?
" Youth of tumultuous soul, and haggard eye!
" Thy wasted form, thy hurried steps I view:
" On thy cold forehead starts the anguish'd dew,
" And dreadful was that bosom-rending sigh!"

COLERIDGE'S MONODY.

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THE

Mad Man of the Mountain.

CHAP. I.

SO! the ſtorm is paſt; the elemental warfare over; the thunder huſhed; the lightning faded; and the winds have done their works of fury, and are ſatisfied!—I was told that I was mad to brave the tempeſt; that the fires of heaven would ſcorch me; and that the blaſts would ſend me, headlong, from the mountains to the vallies.—"How!" ſaid I; "are not the innocent under the protection of the Divinity? Favoured, che-

riſhed, ſupported? Can any of you accuſe me of crime, of luſt, of cruelty, or of murder? No! you know me not; I was not bred among you; I have formed no fellowſhip with you; repoſed no ſecrets in your boſoms. You know not what I am; but, as I am, to the care of Heaven I confidently reſign myſelf."

The peaſants looked earneſtly at me; the children hid themſelves behind their mothers, and I went forth to meditate.—But who could calmly connect his thoughts in an hour like that? I could only look around me: the vineyards were deſtroyed; the grain rooted; the huts of the fiſhermen ſhattered; and, looking over a rock, I ſaw a veſſel daſhed in pieces! I heard the cries of mariners, the ſhrieks of women—I ſaw them all periſh!—Oh, what ruin!—How wonderful that ſo poor an inſect as myſelf

ſhould

ſhould eſcape it! I wandered till the convulſions of Nature ſubſided, till the ſky looked ſmiling, and the waves were leſs boiſterous. The peaſants were then abroad; and the children, no longer fearful of the ſtorm, had entered into their ſports. Roſe-lipped innocents! If any of you are doomed to know the miſeries of Roncorone, happier had it been if ſuch had periſhed amid the tumult of nature!

Weary—wretched and weary! Is nature never to be ſubdued by the means which I exerciſe? I expoſe myſelf to heat and to cold: ſummer produces no fevers, winter no agues; neither dews nor fogs can affect my body; and if I lie all the night on the damp earth, in the morning my limbs feel no contraction. Strange inſenſibility!

I will argue with ſome philoſopher on the protraction of a miſerable life: I once

talked of it to a grey-beard, who called himſelf a ſage, but we could not agree in principles. He had never known misfortune; he was a vehicle moved by few paſſions; and, in directing me to a road for which I had enquired, he ſent me into a labyrinth. Smiling at his diſſertation, he frowned on me, and ſaid I was mad; but he was a liar! I was not then mad; my brain, indeed, has ſince been rent aſunder, preſſed, diſtorted;—and yet, even now, I can beat down his hypotheſis, and prove that his arguments had more ſound than reaſon.

Shame on ſuch empiric philoſophers! Hearken, you ragged herdſman! leave awhile your goats, and remember the names which I ſhall repeat to you; ſpeak of them with a grave face and ſolemn tone, and the world ſhall worſhip you. The fellow flies

from

from me!—Rot in obſcurity, then, and let not the word *great* be found in your epitaph.

It is ſtrange that in this immenſe world I can find no ſociety, or eſtabliſh any friendſhips; man, woman, and child diſclaim me, look on me with terror, fly from me. If I ſpeak of my ſorrows, it muſt be to the elements, or to ſome inanimate or ſenſeleſs object; the miſeries of Roncorone are confined to his own breaſt, and no one commiſerates his ſufferings. Is there on the earth ſo forlorn an object, ſo ſolitary a being—one ſo loſt to the felicities of ſociety, and to the joys of exiſtence? I have of late had little commerce with man.—I have almoſt forgotten him; his virtues paſs from my brain, and his good qualities are ſcarcely remembered, though I retain a ſenſe of all his imperfections and vices. In the public haunts, he will aſſemble, converſe, liſten, and communicate; it is then that ſtrife is nurſed on

the boſom of tranquillity. Even in theſe wild ſcenes, at the evening hour, I often ſee two fellow-labourers wind through the valley towards their little huts; their toil is over; their wives, their children await them; they are happy; they ſing, and the mountain caverns echo their joy. Thoſe who, in the frozen North, never thank the ſun for its bleſſings, and thoſe who, in the torrid zone, often gaſp beneath its rays, ſtill have their ſocial pleaſures. Let it be ſo; and God increaſe their happineſs, though I am left to ſolitude and anguiſh! My imagination ſometimes peoples my cell; on one ſide of me ſits Miſery, on the other Affliction; Deſpair groans at my feet; and, in the darkeſt receſs, I ſee the fiery eye-balls of Inſanity.—Congenial aſſociates! reign unmoleſted till the broken voice of Death ſhall cry aloud, "Mortal, I ſummon thee hence; reſiſt not my

my decree, but go with me into perpetual darkneſs!"

He is, however, a phyſician ſkilled in every malady, and yet the extent of his practice will not gain him reputation; let him only lay his bony fingers on the pulſe, and you ſhall hear the terrified patient implore him to retire. Not ſo with me: I would fee him for his art, and endeavour to make his name paſs current as that of an able graduate;—he has hitherto avoided me; but he will ſoon be at the cell of Roncorone. On his arrival he may pronounce my diſtemper mortal; therefore, ere he approaches, I will employ myſelf in an office—I will go through the narrative of my life. It ſhall be laid in a corner of my cave, in order that it may be known by the villagers who the poor wretch of the mountain was. Moſt men who write their own lives, are ſtimulated by

egotiſm :—what a fine poliſh do they give to their ſelf-acknowledged virtues, and how curiouſly do they compreſs the ſtory of their vices! They attach good motives to the baſeſt of their actions; and the mere duties of fellowſhip are called ebullitions of ſenſibility and refined philanthropy. Theſe ſchoolmen often puzzle us in finding their meaning. They have a general opinion, that ſublimity muſt be obſcure, leſt the aptneſs of little minds ſhould deſtroy the admiration of great ones.

To know that a man is virtuous, is ſufficient to make us eſteem him; but when he is allied to us, when our blood owes its ſource to him, and when to God and to him belong our very lives, we are inclined to exclaim, with mingled joy and pride, "This is our father! this is our father!"

So

So have I, a thouſand times, and with the greateſt fervour, ſaid of my parent, whoſe uncorrupted ſoul, irreproachable manners, and virtuous habits of life made him the admiration of many, and alſo the envy of ſome. His anceſtors had been the followers of Glory: he had, himſelf, trod in her paths, ſnatched laurels from her field, and been applauded for his valour and enterpriſe. Theſe exploits had been performed in the vigour of youth and early days of manhood; but, marrying at the age of twenty-five, the ſolicitations of his wife removed him from the army, and eſtabliſhed him in Venice, where I was born and educated.

He could not boaſt of the favours of Fortune; and love, not intereſt, had united him to my mother, whoſe property was inconſiderable;—but her perſonal charms were conſpicuous, and her virtues more [illegible]

prized than a crown of pearls. As the diſſipations of life were not by either of them conſidered as neceſſary to happineſs, but were juſtly held to be the deſtroyers of it, they lived in retirement, and nicely limited their expenditure, in order that, in the days of age, there might be no complaints of inſufficiency: to many, therefore, they were not known; ſtill they had friends who were ſenſible of their worth, and even willing to proclaim it in ſociety.

It was two years after their union before my mother gave me to the arms of my father, and bade him bleſs his God for me.—She nurtured me at her breaſt, reared me as a botaniſt would a tender plant, and at the age of five years I gambolled around her, her blooming, healthful, and darling boy!

The lives of my parents were tranquil as ſummer days; in them was ſeen the harmony

mony of connubial affection, and a ſweet accordance of ſentiment and paſſions.—Their little Franceſco was their delight;—and he was alternately in the arms of the one, and in the lap of the other. My father, when I was ſix years old, began to educate me; my mother alſo became my tutoreſs, and the manner in which I received their joint inſtructions, ſpread the faces of both of them with the ſmiles of pleaſure and expectation. I was proud of the praiſe they beſtowed on me, and, as I grew older, ſtrove moſt ſedulouſly to merit it;—a ſqueeze of the hand, or an embrace from my father, and a kiſs from the lips of my dear mother, always rewarded my efforts; and to obtain either, young as I then was, I could have ſpent hours in ſtriving to deſerve them.

I was filial before I knew the ſignification of the word duty; and ſo much did I

love my parents, that I believed no other man could be ſo noble and juſt—no other woman ſo good and virtuous. In my ſimplicity I told them ſo, and it made them ſmile: they attempted, however, to explain to me the error of my opinion, and to point out examples; but nothing that they ſaid could convince me to the contrary, or correct the youthful ideas of their infallibility.—I ſtill continued to grow, to learn, and almoſt to adore my parents; but a large portion of my happineſs was loſt to me, becauſe it was evident that the health of my father was rapidly declining. I was the firſt to ſpeak of the circumſtance when he confeſſed himſelf ill; magnifying the malady when my mother was not preſent, I expreſſed to him all my fears and apprehenſions, and his ſickly ſmiles in theſe moments only ſerved to increaſe my ſuſpicions and diſtreſs.

For

For ſeveral months afterwards I ſecretly obſerved the effects of the diſorder, which was now become chronical; the paleneſs of his cheeks, the feebleneſs of his voice, and the means which he uſed in order to conceal his pain, were all viſible to me; and I doubted not but that the grave would ſoon hide him from me and my dear mother.

One evening he ſaid to me—"I confeſs there are grounds for your fears, though I have been anxious not to ſhew them to you and to your better parent. I can counterfeit no longer. How old are you, dear boy?"

"In June I ſhall be thirteen, father."

"I ſhall not live till then!'—He ſighed deeply.

"Not till then!" I cried; "not live till then—till June!—a very few months.—Oh,

Oh, God grant that you may! God grant it!"

"Dear ſon!" ſaid my father, "be compoſed, and do not let your mother hear you. You have ever been the beſt of children:—when I am dead, my boy—nay, if thus you weep and afflict yourſelf——"

"I will no more—go on—proceed, father."

"When I am dead, Franceſco, let not your affection for your ſurviving parent ever decreaſe; ſolace, cheriſh, comfort her! ſhe will much want your aſſiſtance."

"She ſhall have it! ſhe ſhall have it!"

"I ſhall not leave either of you rich, but you will both be removed from want; the occurrences of life, however, are many and uncertain; ſhould any diſaſter befal your mother——"

"I will

"I will take it to my own account; work from morning till night for her, and if ſhe fall into affliction, I will not go from her bed till ſhe is either reſtored to health, or removed from me by death for ever!"

My father preſſed me to his heart; ſwept away my tears as well as his own, and would not ſuffer me to ſpeak any more on the ſubject. He daily grew worſe; my mother was almoſt frantic; I gazed on him with increaſing anguiſh; his ſtruggles agonized me nearly as much as himſelf; and, as he had preſaged, *before June* I ſaw him on his death-bed! *before June* his body was laid in the burial vault of his forefathers! I ſtrove not to conquer my emotions; my heart was burſting; and I was ever running to my mother, hiding my head on her boſom, and bewailing the death of my father.

Her

Her conduct was ſuch, that I had hopes I ſhould not ſoon have to lament for her in a ſimilar manner; ſhe often wept, but, at the ſame time, ſtrove to rouſe me into activity. At firſt I thought her ſenſe of feeling leſs acute than mine, and that ſhe would forget the departed ſooner than I ſhould; but, Oh! I found, ſoon afterwards, that ſhe ſmiled merely to comfort me; that ſhe talked with an appearance of calmneſs on mortality even when the ſubject chilled her blood; and that the ſtrings of her poor heart were each moment breaking.

She ſtruggled ſix or ſeven months firmly: I then followed her to a ſick bed—I then remembered the vow that I had made to my father; and, as I kiſſed her withering hand, repeated it. Days and weeks I hung over her; if I found her chilly, "She is dying!" I would exclaim, "ſhe is dying!" But if a hectic

hectic came upon her cheeks, unskilled in the causes, and mistaking the effect of it, I would cry, "She will survive! My mother will rise again in health!"

The suggestions of hope, however, were false; for as I, one night, and at the latest hour of it, was gazing on her face, I saw it suddenly become convulsed and distorted; her extremities were cold and lifeless, and her eyes stedfastly fixed on me. I shrieked; rang a bell for some person to come to me; and, though stricken with terror, raised her in my arms, and begged her to let me hear her voice. Her mouth was twisted; but she strove to speak, and my ears caught the faint sounds of "God," and of "dear son." She fell agonized from my embrace, stretching to her greatest length; and her soul, aided by the spirit of immortality, soared to the regions of bliss and eternity!

Father!

Father! mother! the ſmiles of the Divinity and his angels, and all the bleſſings of the myſterious world, fall upon and encompaſs you!

I was now an orphan: my protectors, my inſtructors were gone; and my young eyes ſaw only deſolation before them. The ſervants, who were in the houſe, joined their lamentations with mine, and with me ſighed over the corpſe of my mother. I had ever dearly loved my father;—had been conſcious of his loſs, and held him moſt faithfully in my memory; but when I attended the body of my other parent to the receptacle of death—when I ſaw her conſigned to the cold earth, and knew that her eyes would open on me no more—that her tongue could no longer call me to her preſence, and that her arms were never again to encircle my neck—I ſhuddered, groaned, and fell ſwooning into the

the arms of the ſecond mourner at the funeral.

This perſon was Vincent Roncorone, the brother of my father, to whoſe care and protection my laſt ſurviving parent had conſigned me. My uncle poſſeſſed fewer ſenſibilities than myſelf, or, poſſeſſing them, knew better how to conceal them;—he was a Profeſſor of Philoſophy in Venice; and thoſe who attended his ſchool were ſoon made acquainted with the hypotheſes of the ancient ſtoics. Vincent, however, was not without tenderneſs, and in many caſes his humanity was exemplary; his reputation was great as a ſcholar, and his followers in Venice were numerous.

He and my father had ever ſhewn a true fraternal affection towards each other; though their purſuits in their early years had differed materially, the bond of their love had never

never been broken; and when the one retired from the army to quiet life, the other courted his ſociety, and was daily in his company. Vincent eſteemed my mother as much as he did his brother; and, by the notice he took of me, it was evident that I was no inconſiderable favourite. The reſemblance which he bore to my father alone cauſed me to love him; and, in his converſation, there was ſomething ſo peculiarly ſtriking, even to a young mind—at leaſt to mine, that I abandoned the trifling purſuits of pleaſure and amuſement, merely to hear him talk with my father on ſubjects which I could, however, but little underſtand.

Still there was an inimitable tone, a manner, a geſture;—I liſtened, and ſometimes thought I comprehended, and one day was ſo fixed, that when he ceaſed to ſpeak, and I went up to my mother, who was ſitting at

ſome

ſome little diſtance, I found that my poſture had been ſufficiently determined to enable her to draw a perfect reſemblance of my face, and to give to it the expreſſion of admiration which had been actually ſtamped upon it.—From that happy to this moſt miſerable day, have I retained this token of her love and genius; in all my viciſſitudes, in all my troubles and diſtractions retained it! And was I really once the boy it beſpeaks—blooming, joyous, animated? Now, whenever I bend over the ſtream, I ſee reflected a deathlike figure; a reſemblance of a pining ghoſt; a ſallow, miſerable wretch!—And this is Roncorone: he from whom every little innocent of the village flies to its mother, crying, "He comes! he comes! Save me! ſave me!"

But I have been wandering from the paths of narrative.—My uncle bore me in his arms

arms from the grave of my mother; and when my reaſon returned, I found him penſively hanging over me. I inſtantly remembered my recent ſituation; I raiſed my head, and laid it on his breaſt; threw my arms around his neck, and, ſobbing, exclaimed, "Oh my mother! my bleſſed, bleſſed mother!"

"She is bleſſed," ſaid Vincent, placidly; "the fineſt feeling that will ever enter into your ſoul while on earth, muſt be groſs to thoſe which attach to the heaven-ranging ſpirit of your mother. Franceſco, dry up your tears: you are not a child; you have a mind; plant in it fortitude."

"I cannot, uncle," I replied, "ſo ſoon wiſh to deſtroy the image of my mother.—She was all tenderneſs: ſhe had a thouſand virtues!"

"She

" She has now a thouſand rewards, nephew. The ſcale of Omnipotence has already turned in her favour."

" Her former affection, at this moment, ſteals upon my ſoul.—How ſhe fondled me in my childhood! How ſhe ſmiled on me in my ſports! How ſhe, in my growing youth——"

" Franceſco, diſmiſs theſe thoughts if you would be happy. Think of your mother as a *ſaint*—forget her as a *woman*."

" I cannot forget that I am an orphan! I cannot forget that I have no friend on earth!"

" Franceſco!" ſaid Vincent, " in what character do you regard me? When your mother, on her death-bed, gave you over to me, do you think that *ſhe* did not conſider me as your friend?"

" Dear

"Dear uncle!" I exclaimed, "forgive me; I have been raſh; my grief has made me inconſiderate. But hear my apology, my juſtification."

"My affection can diſpenſe with it," he replied: "only when we meet again, let me ſee you more tranquil. Be ſure of this—if I can eſtabliſh your happineſs, improve your fortune, or enrich your mind, my aſſiduities ſhall never be wanting."

I bowed upon his hand, and he retired; I ſaw him again at night, when I affected to be more compoſed; and during ſeveral ſucceſſive days, endeavoured to appear tranquil, though I had a load of grief on my mind. Vincent was apparently pleaſed with the alteration; he repeated his arguments on fortitude and ſtability, and put ſome books in my hand, which ſeconded his doctrines.—I read them partly, but they did not convince me;

me; and laying them aſide, I ſtill thought there was a luxury in ſighs and tears, though Vincent and the philoſophers derided them.

Time ſoftened my grief; and ſix months after my firſt reſidence in the houſe of my uncle, he declared my conduct to be juſt as he wiſhed it. The images of the dead, however, were not caſt down in the temple of my ſoul, nor had memory diſcarded them. Vincent Roncorone entered me as one of his pupils, and likewiſe gave me many private inſtructions; for he perceived that my underſtanding was naturally good, and was careful in improving and embelliſhing it as much as poſſible. We read and converſed together: ſuch of his precepts and opinions as I admired, I treaſured in my mind; but ſuch of them as I diſapproved—and at the age of ſixteen I flattered myſelf that I poſſeſſed ſome powers of diſcrimination—I rejected

and forgot. My firſt declamations were praiſed; when I was ſeventeen they were admired, and ſaid to be wholly without puerilities, and I was by many called a youth of great promiſe. I had friends who aſſured me of patronage; I viſited the Convents, and formed connexions with men of early and of advanced years; with the women I was not unacquainted; being no pedant, I talked not of books when in their company, and was generally called by them the agreeable Roncorone.

Oh days of happineſs! I ſcarcely dare let my memory, even for one poor moment, dwell on ye. Were it then thought or ſuſpected that I ſhould irrecoverably loſe the favour and opinion of the world? That man ſhould hate, and reaſon forſake me?—But who can aſſure himſelf of a particle of felicity a moment beyond the one in which he

he actually enjoys it? Angels have been expelled from Heaven—man from the bowers of innocence—Emperors hurled from their thrones to drag the chain after the chariots of conquerors—and Roncorone—Oh miſery and madneſs! * * * * *

* * * * * *

Vincent beheld my progreſs with pleaſure, heard me praiſed with delight, made me the ſubject of his converſations, and treated me with an affection that filled me with love and gratitude. His mind was firm, but not auſtere; he even ſacrificed to the Muſes, and encouraged the talent he found I poſſeſſed for poetry; but he forgot not to ſpeak of the general diſappointments, the mortifications, and the miſeries of thoſe who place their hopes of fortune and advancement on their powers of verſification. We did not often put reciprocal ſentiments into

metrical dreſs; his verſes were generally philoſophy harmonized; my ſtanzas were leſs ſaturnine, and I ſeldom left the epic paths but to ſtep into thoſe of love; nay, I accuſtomed myſelf ſo much to the latter walk, that my uncle at length threatened to take my pen from me, leſt the indulgence of ſo ſoft a ſubject ſhould ſap the energies of my mind.—Vincent! thou canſt not ſee me *now*.—My mind—my mind!——

My uncle had never been married; never had much converſe with women; never knew, never would acknowledge the ecſtacies of love; the paſſion ſo called he confined to friendſhip, beyond which he would not allow the ſober ſoul to ſtray. This point I always warmly debated with him; our energies were nearly equal; and when we cloſed on the ſubject, we found that the one had not,

not, in any degree, influenced the other; we were both combatants, both victors.

I had entered into my twenty-firſt year, when a peſtilential fever raged in Venice; hundreds of mortals were ſwept away in a day; and it ſeized, moſt furiouſly, my friend and monitor. It was ſoon viſible that its effects on him were fatal; for he became enfeebled, his blood boiled, his face was livid, and his eyes retired far into their ſockets. Reaſon was entirely annihilated; he raved, and died frantic in my arms.

Vincent! friend! father!—Even now the remembrance of thee draws tears from the eyes of Roncorone.

I attended him during the whole of his illneſs, raiſed him in my arms, wiped his forehead, and moiſtened his parched lips.—I was told that I ſhould imbibe the infection, ſtill I did not quit him; I thought of no

danger, and reſolved not to leave him till his breath was wholly ſuppreſſed. Could I then have foreſeen the events which were dependant on my life, or a thouſandth part of the miſeries which have ſince fallen on me, I would have preſſed Vincent cloſer to my breaſt; every noxious breathing that came from his body ſhould have entered into mine. I would have ſought the hoſpitals, and ſtrained the foaming lazar in my arms till we had both madly died together.

I buried Vincent.—While I hung over his grave, my ſufferings were almoſt as poignant as thoſe which I experienced at the interment of my mother; and the torch-bearers ſeemed to behold me with terror as I ſtalked through the long aiſle of the church in which he was laid. I found that all the philoſophy of the deceaſed had not made me a philoſopher. In his eſcritoir I diſcovered

covered his will, which had been made ſome conſiderable time; and he had bequeathed all his property to his dear nephew, Franceſco Roncorone, whom he prayed the Father of Heaven eternally to bleſs. With what rapture muſt the aſſociating ſpirits have received ſuch a ſoul as Vincent's!

My uncle had accumulated a conſiderable ſum of money, and alſo managed my little fortune, during my minority, with ſuch care, that I was ſurpriſed at my own riches. I had not entered into active life, nor did I feel inclined to do ſo after the death of Vincent. Some of my moſt intimate friends would talk to me on the ſubject: I was much urged to follow the purſuits of my late uncle; but this I peremptorily declined. A gloomy Monk, of the Order of Saint Francis, invited me to join the brotherhood; and a lively Sicilian Officer held out many

ſpecious lures in order to draw me into the army. I inclined neither to bigotry nor to ſuperſtition; the oratory of both parties, therefore, might have been ſpared.

My name was not ſo much mentioned in Venice as it had been, and many people cenſured what they called my indolence; but, though I declined in the opinion of the men, I roſe in the eſtimation of the women. I attached myſelf to the ſex; they ſoftened and poliſhed my manners, and likewiſe refined my ſentiments. I was invited to every party of feſtivity, and the women conſulted me on many occaſions: I ſelected books for ſome of them, and muſic for others; my opinions directed them in their ſtudies, and my taſte was deemed to be of a ſuperior nature. Though my application in knowledge was not ſo intenſe as it had been, ſtill it was not abandoned; and though I was

leſs

leſs auſtere in my diſpoſition, and more attached to pleaſures, yet I ſhunned the profligate, the idle, and the ignorant. Thoſe who thought my philoſophy weakened, acknowledged that my poetry was improved; and I was now more ambitious of being thought to poſſeſs a beautiful imagination than a great and ſolid one.

My love for the ſex to which I had then recently attached myſelf, was of a general nature, till I met with Roſolie Venzone.—Roſolie! What, write of Roſolie! Let me think.—Thought makes me mad!—Roſolie!—anſwer me—ſpeak to Roncorone—Roſolie, Roſolie!—Ah! wherefore do I call on one long ſince ſtiffened by the hand of murder! * * * * * *

* * * * * *

Spirit of Vincent! witneſs that I am a philoſopher: for while the fiend urged me

to leap the gulph of damnation, I named to him the power that had caſt *him* into it—curſed him—fled! Was not that right, guardian of my youth? The focus of the mind again receives the rays of reaſon, and the aberration of ideas is over; they collect and aſſociate.

I formed an acquaintance with a young German, whoſe name was Alberti, and was by him introduced to many families, to which I had before been a ſtranger. I accompanied him one evening to the aſſembly of a female relation: there was a numerous company, and feſtivity ruled the hour;—many of the women were extremely handſome; but Alberti pointed out one to me, as poſſeſſing a great ſuperiority of beauty; I looked at her, and not only confeſſed, but alſo felt, the truth of his obſervation.

She

She was young, exquiſitely formed; her grace was unſtudied; her charms natural; her eyes ſpoke ſweetneſs of mind, and ſenſibility dawned from them. I thought ſhe excelled every woman that I had ever ſeen, and equalled any one that I had poetically imagined;—I could not withdraw my obſervation till ſhe looked at me; I then hurried to Alberti, who had left me, and urged ſome queſtions reſpecting the ſtranger. He ſmiled at my warmth; told me that her name was Roſolie Venzone; that her beauty was greater than her fortune; that ſhe was an orphan, and had been left to the protection of Signor Salvini, the friend of her deceaſed father.

"Salvini!" I exclaimed; "what, Michael Salvini, who lived formerly at Florence?"

"The ſame," replied Alberti; "do you know him?"

"No."

"Do you *wiſh* to know him? I have ſome acquaintance with him, and will introduce you."

"No, no! Salvini and Roncorone can never be friends."

"Indeed!" cried Alberti; "how ſo, pray?"

"Becauſe he was the enemy of my father, whoſe honour he calumniated, and whoſe fortune he endeavoured to overthrow. The man who was injured, nobly fought the defamer, fought with, conquered him! When I was a boy, I have often heard my father ſpeak of him; and his name has always been hateful to me. Is he in the room?"

"No, he retired at ten; but I preſume, Roncorone, your hatred does not extend to his ward?"

"Ah Alberti! is it poſſible that enmity can attach to ſuch an object!"

"I will

"I will make her known to you then," ſaid my friend; and leading me acroſs the room, he introduced me to Roſolie Venzone.

I was ſoon convinced that her attractions were not confined to her perſon; her mind alſo was deſerving of much admiration. I attached myſelf to her during the remainder of the evening; Alberti could not draw me from her; and when ſhe left the aſſembly, my ſpirits decreaſed, and I became indifferent to the muſic and company.

Several days ſucceeded, and I ſaw not Roſolie: I looked for her moſt anxiouſly in every public place; but Alberti told me that ſhe had not left her houſe ſince I met her, owing to a ſlight indiſpoſition. How much did I regret that I could not preſent myſelf before her! I never could enter the doors of Salvini—never could endeavour to conciliate the affection of the traducer of my father's

father's honour. At length, however, we met again;—I flew to her with rapture, and fancied that ſhe regarded me with pleaſure; there were no traces of her illneſs left; ſhe was blooming, lovely!—Inſenſible to the beauty, wit, and elegance of every other woman, to ingratiate myſelf into her favour was my ſtrenuous endeavour; and in my firſt attempts I happily ſucceeded, or flattered myſelf that I did. I joined neither in the dance nor the concert, but remained by the ſide of Roſolie, delighting my eye with her beauty, and my ear with her ſentiments.

I wanted to ſpeak to her of Salvini, but dared not to do it. Some little time afterwards, however, Alberti came, and whiſpered to me that Signor Salvini had juſt entered the room, and was coming towards Roſolie.—My friend led me away: deſirous of ſeeing Salvini, I retired but a few paces, and ſtanding

ing behind a group of dancers, a ſeeming obſerver of them, frequently turned my eyes towards Roſolie, and anxiouſly watched for the appearance of her guardian. He afterwards came up to her, and placed himſelf on the ſeat that I had juſt vacated; I had never ſeen him before; and, ſeeing him now, my cheeks glowed, and my heart palpitated; for I was looking on a ſerpent whoſe ſting had been impotently darted at my brave father.

Salvini *appeared* to me ſcarcely more than forty years of age; his figure was fine, his face handſome, and his eyes were of that nature which puzzles the obſerver in finding their true meaning;—they made me inſtantly ſuſpect him to be deeply verſed in the arts of hypocriſy. His attention to Roſolie was pointed; he did not leave her for an hour; and then as he removed only

to

to a ſmall diſtance, I ventured not to addreſs her again during the evening. Salvini and Roſolie retired early: Oh, how I envied him the pleaſure of leading her out of the room! and how great was my pain to think that *he* was her guardian.

I went home ſoon after, and never enjoyed leſs ſleep in one night; Roſolie's image was productive of both pleaſure and pain, and I dreamt of her in my ſhort ſlumbers. Oh my ſweet one!—About the hour of noon on the following day my friend Alfred was introduced to me in my chamber; he bantered me concerning my precipitate retreat on the preceding evening, and worked upon me till he drew from me a full confeſſion of my love for Roſolie. But he laughed at my declaration, and ridiculed the ſolemnity with which I had made it.

"Wherefore

"Wherefore theſe looks of gravity?" he enquired; "and why that ſtride of wo[illegible] and deep-toned accent?"

"Alberti, you are no lover."

"Roncorone, the ladies of Venice will tell you otherwiſe; and thoſe in Naples will corroborate the evidence."

"Which, united, will only convince me that you are a mere gallant. My love is but in its infancy, or I could talk of it in——"

"In ſuch terms as many other romantic fellows have done before you. But I muſt leave you now, for I have an engagement at one, and ſhall not be able to ſee you any more to-day. To-morrow, at eleven in the forenoon, I will call on you; and I beg you will be prepared to go with me to meet Roſolie."

"Where, where, my friend?"

"At Salvini's."

"Have

" Have I not told you, Alberti, that I deſpiſe Salvini—that his ſight is hateful to me—that my eye holds him in abhorrence ?"

" True, young miſanthrope: but you will not ſee Salvini in Venice for the courſe of a month."

" Why ? wherefore ?"

" Becauſe he this very morning ſet off for Vienna."

" Heavens! and Roſolie ——"

" Is left by Salvini at his houſe: her only companion is Signora Bianca, her guardian maiden ſiſter, whoſe optics are by no means clear; whoſe ears are not very happy in catching any ſound, except ſuch an one as is made by the diſcharge of a cannon; and whoſe heart, though it be that of an old maid, is ſo excellent, that I almoſt wiſh to creep into a corner of it. Adieu! Be ready on the morrow."

" I will

"I will! I will!" I replied with tranſport.

"At eleven, Roncorone."

"I ſhall not forget, Alberti."

"Farewel!" he ſaid, taking me by the hand.

"Adieu, my dear friend!" I replied, returning his preſſure.

"Roncorone!" ſaid Alberti, returning.

"Signor!"

"Had you not better place the engagement in your tablet?"

"No, no! it is already placed in my heart!"

"How exquiſite are the joys of the romantic!" cried Alberti, with a loud laugh, as he left the room.

The abſence of Salvini filled me with tranſport;—for a few minutes I rejected the idea of entering clandeſtinely the houſe of my father's enemy; but the joy of meeting, ſeeing, and converſing with Roſolie, was exquiſite

exquiſite indeed. I flattered myſelf that I was not an object of indifference to her;—and if, during the abſence of Salvini, I could convince myſelf that I was actually loved by her, the beſt and ſweeteſt hope that I had ever harboured would be realized. I thought nothing of fortune, of my own inability to ſupport her with ſplendour, or of the rancour and enmity of Salvini;—there was in me much expectation of happineſs, and little dread of miſery; my mind was ſtored with thoſe beautiful ideas which impart pleaſure both to the ſoul and body of man; and I baniſhed all thoſe on which anxiety might have depended.—Fool! fool!

Alberti called on me the following day according to his appointment. My vivacious friend was always inclined to ſport with what he called my philoſophy; but I now ſeized him by the arm, and almoſt puſhing him out

out of the houſe, entreated him to bring me before Roſolie as ſoon as poſſible.

In a little time we were at the door of Salvini, and almoſt immediately after introduced to Roſolie Venzone. As I drew near to her, I trembled, but it was with pleaſure; my cheeks heated as I ſpoke to her, and my firſt words were not very diſtinct. Oh how lovely did ſhe then appear to me! Signora Bianca was preſent, and Alberti made me known to her; but, owing to her deafneſs, ſhe could not join in general converſation; my friend, however, attached himſelf to her, in order that I might ſpeak more particularly to Roſolie.

The ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, the good ſenſe and beauty of Salvini's ward, were now more conſpicuous than ever. When I firſt entered the room, I diſcovered a penſiveneſs hanging on her features; but the cloud ſoon went

went over, and her charms grew more ſplendid. What a heart, what a mind this woman poſſeſſed! She appeared neither more nor leſs than Nature deſigned her; her ſenſibilities were her own; and if ſhe knew what affectation was, ſhe had never practiſed it. I was ſolicitous of making myſelf appear deſerving in her eyes, and conſequently meditated an attack on her heart.

If theſe ſentiments were ſomewhat romantic, the inſpirer of them was not a common object. Our viſit was long, and I was reluctant to depart. At length, however, it was neceſſary, and bowing to Signora Bianca, and wiſhing Roſolie good morning, we left the houſe. On the following day I repeated my viſit, and, on the next after that, was alſo at Salvini's: ſcarcely a day elapſed now without my ſeeing my ſweet Roſolie, and I very readily diſpenſed with the attendance of

Alberti.

Alberti. Signora Bianca was always preſent when we met; ſhe was mild, and not without underſtanding; her kindneſs to Roſolie made me reſpect her; ſhe was entirely dependant on Salvini, and had not, I conjectured, ever heard that her brother and my father were enemies.

Salvini had been abſent nearly a month, and had written from Vienna of his intention to return to Venice—a circumſtance which I almoſt dreaded, fearing that it would preclude me from the ſociety of Roſolie, to whom I had never directly ſpoken of my love;—but ſhe muſt have ſeen it; ſuch a declaration would, I feared, be thought premature: the anxiety, however, of knowing in what manner ſhe would receive it, made me determine on making it before Salvini came back to Venice.

I had

I had one morning the happineſs of finding her alone; and my heart moſt ſincerely, though ſecretly, thanked her for admitting me. Enquiring for Signora Bianca, I learned that ſhe was employed in her cloſet; and as I knew her to be rigidly devout, I did not apprehend that, even if ſhe were apprized of my being there, which was by no means probable, ſhe would neglect her duties to come to me. The opportunity of declaring the ſtate of my heart to Roſolie offered itſelf moſt favourably; I had often wiſhed for it—often regretted that time and circumſtances had never aided my deſign;—yet now both were auſpicious; the object before me, ſmiling in her lovelineſs, and every thing agreeable to the purpoſe, I felt a concern, a reſtleſſneſs, nay, even a timidity, and ſeemed almoſt to have forgotten the powers of language.

My

My abaſhment was that of unaſſuming and unaffected love: I was not, like many ſuitors of modern times, preparing a fiction for the ear of a fancied miſtreſs, neither was I furniſhed with thoſe phraſes and ſentiments which by others, conſcious of their own diſability, and barrenneſs of intellect, are kept in readineſs, and faſhioned without taſte, without ſenſibility, and without diſcrimination. But I was going to ſpeak on a ſubject which had alternately filled me with joy and ſorrow, elevated and depreſſed me, raiſed me to hope, and ſunk me in apprehenſion. The time was paſſing, and the opportunity going by. This reflection in ſome degree rouſed me; I drew my chair nearer to her, and, in her eyes, found ſuch ſweet encouragement, that my heart was emboldened, and the ſpell of ſilence no longer on my tongue.

She was then throwing up the window, i order to beſtow a ſmall donation on a poc object in the ſtreet; I would not check th amiable impulſe, but, when ſhe again re turned to her ſeat, took her hand, and en quired whether I had her permiſſion t ſpeak on a ſubject which related particularl to my happineſs. It was at that moment th roſy bluſh came upon her cheek; a ſuſpi cion ſeemed to be paſſing over her mind and after a ſhort embarraſſment and irreſolu tion, ſhe bowed her head to expreſs h acquieſcence.

"Dear Roſolie!" I exclaimed, "I than you for this goodneſs. I ſay *dear* Roſoli becauſe I am prompted by my heart to d ſo; and becauſe, in moments like theſe, cannot attend to the cold conſtruction words and epithets."

"Signor!

"Signor!" ſaid Roſolie, ſmiling—"Signor, pray what has this to do with your happineſs?"

"Oh! much, much! I muſt now avail myſelf fully of your permiſſion; and do not think me either inconſiderate or haſty, if, diſpenſing with thoſe dull faſhions and modes which ſpring from dull heads, or from frivolous hearts, I declare to you as ſincere an affection, as ardent a love as ever roſe in the breaſt of man, as ever was excited in the contemplation of lovelineſs and virtue!"

"Signor Roncorone, this declaration—"

"Is honeſt in all its principles: if uncourtly, it is true; if unembelliſhed, its baſis is ſincerity. I repeat again, that I love you; and that you were dear to my eyes even at the moment they firſt beheld you."

"You confuſe—you embarraſs me——"

"Truth ſhould never confuſe; and virtue, like your's, dear Roſolie, can be but for a ſhort period embarraſſed by the humble declaration of an unaſſuming man, who fears he is not poſſeſſed of ſufficient merit to raiſe in your mind, and to excite in your boſom ſentiments and affections ſimilar to his own. I fear all this; for he who modeſtly loves, muſt have many fears. To enter into any exordium on your perſon, ſweet as it is to me, would have the tones of feppery; and to enumerate your virtues, and methodically comment on them, would place neither of us in a pleaſant view; therefore, on theſe topics I would not enlarge, though it were impoſſible to remain wholly ſilent. In my hours of ſolitude, when my fancy raiſes your figure, then the correſponding qualities of your mind are alſo remembered; and then I can indulge myſelf in the reverie without being

being thought preſumptuous. And yet, Roſolie, could I hope that there was a ſympathy in your ſoul—could I hope for a return of affection——"

"Roncorone! I greatly eſteem you."

"I thank you, Roſolie; it is a kind, a ſoothing, but not altogether a ſatisfactory word. You may eſteem a thouſand other men, though it might be difficult to ſay you *loved* ſo many. Oh that I were aſſured I was ſo happy a being as to be placed in the ſecond claſs, and that thoſe affections which I harbour for you were counterbalanced and equal in your boſom!"

"*And may they not be*, Roncorone?"

"And are they? *are they*, ſweet Roſolie?"

"I never ſee virtue but I love it, as well as its poſſeſſor; and ſeeing it in you, I would have my reſpect increaſe, not diminiſh."

" Dear girl!" I exclaimed, " be mor explicit. You lead me half way to joy and I entreat you not to ſtop me in m courſe. Go on, I conjure you; realiſe m hopes; and tell me that my wiſhes hav not been repeated ineffectually."

Roſolie, ſmiling, but with a tear in eac eye, was preparing to anſwer, when a ſer vant came to her to ſay that Signora Bianc wiſhed her to go immediately to her chambe " Delay it," I cried, as ſoon as the ſervar had withdrawn, " delay it for a few mo ments, and leave me not unſatisfied."

" I cannot now ſtay," ſhe replied; " w ſhall meet again."

" May I wait on you at this hour to morrow?"

" Then, and at every other time, I ſha be happy to ſee you."

" But may I, in the interim, be aſſure that you pardon my preſumption?"

" The

"There is no preſumption on which I can place my pardon; no offence of which I can ſay, it is forgiven."

"But there is a *love* to which you *can ſay*, Be conſtant, and I will reward you!"

She took my hand as ſhe was leaving the room; the tears, which had been riſing in her eyes, dropped from them upon it; yet ſtill ſhe ſmiled with increaſing lovelineſs, and filled me with rapture by exclaiming—"Be conſtant, and I will reward you!"

This was one of the happieſt days of my life: I had never before taſted ſuch felicity; my joy was obſerved by every perſon who ſaw my face, but from all I concealed the cauſe of my tranſports; my heart panted for the promiſed interview on the ſucceeding day, when I ſuggeſted I ſhould be able to draw from Roſolie a ſtill ſweeter confeſſion, and alſo to place before her thoſe plans which

love had ſo haſtily and fondly ſketched.—The next day, a little before the appointed hour, I ſet out for Salvini's houſe, which, though it were the manſion of my father's deteſted enemy, contained a treaſure that I would not have exchanged for the wealth and grandeur of Perſia.

My happineſs was certainly tinctured with enthuſiaſm, for I was provoked to ſee any face, on this day, marked with anxiety; to every beggar I gave a piece of money, and obſerving one wretch more dejected than any other, I beckoned him into an alley, and doubling my donation, told him to be glad, and bleſs the name of Roſolie.

I found it neceſſary to ſprinkle my imagination a little before I preſented myſelf to her; and did not knock at the door until I found that my reaſon was more calm and governable. Being ſhewn into the room where

where I had, the preceding day, held the intereſting converſation with Roſolie, while the ſervant went to inform her that I was there, I fancied that I heard a repetition of the ſweet ſounds which had then iſſued from her mouth. She did not immediately come to me.

She is diffident, I thought; ſhe cannot keep the roſy bluſhes from her cheeks, and is aſhamed of the ſuffuſion; ſhe trembles to meet her lover, and her timidity ſtill remains to be conquered. Come, dear girl! come and be confident.—My eyes are for adoration, but not for rudeneſs; my ſpeech would be ſimple, not bombaſtic; and if I ſeek for further goodneſs in you, I will entreat for it in the unaffected ſtrains of love, and not dare to exact it either by looſe inſinuation, or by bold enquiries.

She came, juſt as my imagination had pictured her. Her eyes fell from my face to the floor; and her voice trembled as ſhe ſpoke to me, though ſhe endeavoured to appear compoſed. I tried to ſmile away her confuſion, and alſo to remove it by ſpeaking of the common topics at general meetings, and, for a while, forbore to allude to what had occurred on the day then laſt gone by.—This had the effect that I deſired: ſhe was again my unembarraſſed friend; and our mutual reſerve paſſing over, ſeemed to open the way for mutual love. Fortune befriended me in this interview as much as in that of the preceding day: no interruption was likely to be given to our converſation, as Signora Bianca, accompanied by a friendly devotee, was gone to matins.

"To admit you in her abſence," ſaid Roſolie, ſmiling, "would be by her, I fear,

conſidered as an impropriety; but you had propoſed calling this morning, and I had promiſed to ſee you: I was afraid, therefore, that a denial on my part would have ſounded rather unfriendly."

"It would indeed," I replied; "I might, perhaps, have called it even cruel. Bianca, I believe, could not be ſo ſcrupulouſly delicate: beſides, I have ſome reaſon to ſuppoſe that ſhe has admitted me into her particular favour; for ſhe always ſmiles good-naturedly when I approach her, and has ſeveral times given an oblique, and not unhandſome compliment, which made me more ſtudious to increaſe the value of her opinion, and alſo to merit her friendſhip.—But, dear Roſolie, before ſhe returns, allow me to renew the ſubject of yeſterday—a ſubject which, for ſweetneſs, exceeds every other that has met my ear from thoſe prattling

days when I liſtened to my beloved parent nurſe, even to the moments in which I attended, with rapture, to your confeſſions!"

"Confeſſions! Roncorone——"

"Yes, my Roſolie! confeſſions.—Though you were ſparing of your words, thoſe which you did utter were kind evidences in my cauſe; and in your eyes I ſaw ſo much generoſity, ſuch a ſweetly tempered regard, that all the doubts with which my mind was burthened, were ſhifted from it as the dark clouds are often driven from the ſky of ſummer. But as in our nature there is an unappeaſable craving, and as the conſciouſneſs of being happy will often excite a wiſh to be happier ſtill, may I—may I, dear Roſolie, hope that you will now confirm what you ſaid yeſterday, that you will—with delicacy I aſk it of you—be leſs equivocal in telling the man to whom you are the firſt and

and beſt beloved object in the world, that—you love him!"

"I will! I will!" ſhe cried; "our ſentiments are kindred; heſitation would be inſincere; concealment hypocriſy. I confeſs, and bluſh not to confeſs, that, before you had made to me any declaration, my heart had voluntarily given to you its beſt, its moſt ardent affections. This is, indeed, being ingenuous; but I am ſelf-acquitted, and do not fear that you will condemn me."

"Condemn you!" I exclaimed; "condemn you! a thouſand kind thanks to you, and as many bleſſings on you for your ſincerity! And when I abuſe it, may I become contemptible to the eyes of man, and ſinful in thoſe of God! It is now known to us—bleſſed knowledge!—that mutual love reigns in our breaſts: mutual love has but one grand object, union; till that is effected, the

the ſympathies, however nearly allied, cannot wholly comingle; in our pleaſures there is ſomething yet to ſigh for; and happy as we are, there are felicities ſtill to attain.—Lovely as you now appear to me, and dearly as my heart at this moment prizes you, I hope a day will ſoon arrive when I ſhall fondly imagine that a brighter beam of beauty irradiates your face, and that your heart is enriched by many additional virtues!"

"Stay, ſtay, enthuſiaſt!" cried Roſolie.

"Oh, check not my good and happy ſpirits," I replied, "nor baniſh my imagination from the banquet prepared by itſelf.—Alluſions and inſinuations are the practices of the weak and deſigning; of the former, when love is ſtronger than the underſtanding; of the latter, when villany is ſtronger than love; I therefore diſclaim them for their unworthineſs;

unworthineſs; he who admires ſincerity, and I confeſs I do, will never willingly deviate from its ways. Circumſtances, dear Roſolie, induce me to be brief—abrupt perhaps you will think me; yet allow me to aſk whether I may not expect my love and aſſiduity to meet with an *early* reward—for a reward you have actually promiſed me; and whether, in the character of an huſband, I may not ſtrive to make myſelf ſtill more worthy of your eſteem, of your tenderneſs, and affection?"

"Oh no, Roncorone!"

"No! do not ſay ſo: you have confeſſed——"

"What I would again aver."

"That you are my friend—that you love no other man better?"

"None ſo well! I repeat it—none ſo truly!"

"God

"God bleſs you for it! And what then ſhould prevent our union? What barrier can there poſſibly be to ſuch a circumſtance?—Name it; I entreat you to name it."

"My poverty."

"Your poverty! your poverty!"

"Yes, that which chills many a noble heart—that which ſends many a virtuous being to ſhiver in obſcurity—that which curdles the milk of many a mother, whoſe breaſt, is the only offering ſhe has for her meagre babe—and that which once brought a thouſand evils on my buried parent!"

She burſt into tears: I begged her to be compoſed.

"I ſhall be, preſently," ſhe ſaid; "I do not often yield to the weakneſs of complaint, and now will quiet it as ſoon as poſſible.—But as you may not be acquainted with my real

real ſituation, let me conciſely inform you of it."

"It will diſtreſs you, dear Roſolie!—it will give you pain."

"No, not much; I am not entering into a narrative; a few ſimple words will be ſufficient for my preſent purpoſe. My father, I grieve to ſay it, was a ſon of error; fatally attached to what are by many called the pleaſures of life, and better known to the followers of diſſipation than to the lovers and practiſers of virtue. Yet he was not altogether deſtitute of good qualities; he however ſuffered them to ſtray from him too often, and was not ſolicitous enough to gain the general regard of the world; though many have ſpoken in his praiſe, and all who knew him, acknowledged the force of his wit and miſapplied genius."

"He was not, I believe, a Venetian?"

"No,

"No, he was a native of Florence, and in that city he married my mother; a beautiful and accompliſhed woman, a branch of a conſiderable family, and endowed with a fortune ſuperior to his own. The ſtyle in which, for ſeveral years, he continued to live, the magnificence of his table, the liberality of his ſoul, and his eaſineſs to be impoſed on, at length conſiderably impaired his fortune; but ſtill anxious to court the opinion of the world, ſtill loth to depart from his uſual conſequence, he went forward inſtead of retracting, and winked at the danger that ſeemed to be lurking near to him, when he ſhould have prudently pondered on the means of preventing its cloſer approach.—About this time he loſt his wife, my dear mother! It touched him; he mourned ſincerely for her; reſided a twelvemonth in retirement; and then—Oh what ſtrange infatuation!

fatuation!—returned to Florence, to folly, to extravagance ſtill more glaring and unbounded!"

"The fatal effects of an ill-regulated mind!"

"Ah! they were, indeed.—I was then young, and unconſcious of his errors, as well as ignorant of his circumſtances. The world ſmiled, and he was ſatisfied; the ſycophants cringed, and he perceived not their duplicity; they commended, applauded, and he further ſtrove to excite their ſmiles and admiration. At length, in the vovage of pleaſure he met with a complete wreck;—the demands upon him were almoſt immumerable, and his fortune was not adequate to ſatisfy half of them. The whole of his property was wreſted from him; and all thoſe friends, thoſe ſmiling friends, became as cold as the ſtatues which adorned his veſtibule, through

through which the hypocrites were accuſtomed to paſs on their way to pleaſure and luxuries. This reverſe was dreadful to my father! Fearful of the malice of his creditors, he reſolved to leave Florence immediately, and to retire with privacy to ſome place where he and his diſaſters ſhould be unknown. I was ſitting one evening with a female friend of my departed mother, who had, ſince her death, reſided in the houſe, and took on her the duties of a governeſs, when my father ruſhed into the room, and having put a letter into the hands of my inſtructreſs, took me up in his arms, and carried me to a carriage that was waiting in the ſtreet. He ſprang in after me, and we were driven away with ſuch ſpeed, that I began to expreſs my childiſh fears, and enquire the cauſe of our unſeaſonable expedition; but taking me on his knee, and kiſſing me, he aſſured me there

was

was no danger, and begged that I would not aſk him any more queſtions of that nature. I obeyed him, and continued ſilent; but his ſighs melted my heart, and when I laid my head upon his breaſt, I felt ſeveral tears fall from his eyes upon my face.

"We travelled all the night," continued Roſolie, "and reſted but little on the following day. My young mind was impreſſed by the ſtrangeneſs of my father's countenance, and he ſpoke to me in ſuch mingled tones of tenderneſs and melancholy as I had never heard before. On the third day he declared he could go no further, and the driver was deſired to ſtop at the firſt inn;—we were, however, at ſome conſiderable diſtance from an houſe of reception; and when at length we were driven to one, the ſtrength of my father ſeemed to be wholly exhauſted. He ſent me to bed almoſt immediately,

mediately, and ſoon after retired to his own; but when, in the morning, I ran to his chamber, I was told that he was very ill, and that a Doctor had juſt been ſent for. With my eyes full of tears, I undrew the curtains, and took hold of his hot hand;—raiſing himſelf with difficulty, he claſped me in his arms; but the Doctor then coming in, I was led from the room by one of the female ſervants of the inn. Going ſorrowfully along a paſſage, ſome perſon ſpoke my name, and touched my ſhoulder, when, turning round, I perceived that it was Signor Salvini, whom I knew to be an intimate friend of my father. With great ſurpriſe he enquired who brought me thither. "My father, Signor," I replied, "my father!"

"And where is he?" demanded the Signor.

"Dying

"Dying in that chamber!" I cried, pointing to the room in which he lay, and to which his friend immediately haſtened.

"I promiſed," Roſolie rejoined, "to uſe but few words, and muſt not therefore be ſo minute in my deſcription which, I confeſs, even now gives me great pain. The fever that had ſeized my father was too obſtinate for the powers of medicine; I ſaw him only twice afterwards, and, in the laſt interview, with many, many ſtruggles of affection, he gave me over to Signor Salvini, who was ſtanding by the ſide of his bed, and bade me love and reſpect the man who had promiſed to be my protector, when the grave ſhould have hidden from me for ever my laſt ſurviving parent. He died a few hours after having uttered this injunction!"

"Dear Roſolie!" I cried, "you are diſtreſſed, agitated!"——

"No,

"No, not much—not much; but the fatal errors of my father can never make me ceaſe to love and pity him. Signor Salvini was travelling towards Venice when he met with us at the inn; and having buried his friend, and tenderly endeavoured to ſolace me, he took me with him the remainder of his journey, and I have continued to reſide with him from that to the preſent period."

"Oh! that you had fallen under the care of ſome other man!" I cried.

"Why?" enquired Roſolie with quickneſs.

"It matters not now," ſaid I, checking myſelf; "I only wiſh it had been my father to whom you had been conſigned; that he and my mother had cheriſhed and ſolaced you; and that their darling boy had grown up with you, and been the happy companion of your earlier days. Oh how ſhould have loved my ſweet aſſociate! You to ſpeak of *poverty*, Roſolie! To plead it as a barrier

to

to our union! Had you been rich, I might have loved you leſs; and you will remember that *I* am no Emperor. He who wiſely ſearches for happineſs, and has ſome knowledge of the beſt, and leaſt precarious manner of obtaining it, will never conſider a ſuperfluity of wealth as the primary object.—Conſent, conſent, my Roſolie, to make the felicity of your Roncorone complete!"

"Roncorone's generoſity," ſhe replied, "deſerves a greater reward than I can poſſibly beſtow; but he ſhall ever find me a faithful and willing friend."

"Heaven bleſs you!" I exclaimed.—"Heaven bleſs you!"

My rapture almoſt overpowered me; I bleſſed her tongue for its aſſurances, and preſſed her, trembling, to my happy boſom. Signora Bianca came into the room ſoon afterwards, and I thought ſhe looked more

earneſtly at us than uſual; ſhe fixed her eyes on the bluſhing face of Roſolie, and did not ſpeak to me with her accuſtomed good-nature. I addreſſed her ſeveral times; but ſhe heard me ſomewhat coldly, and her manners were repulſive till I withdrew. I could not conjecture the actual cauſe of this behaviour; and knowing that ſhe could not poſſibly have overheard us, I remained in ſuſpenſe all the day.

On the following morning, however, I received a letter from Roſolie, which explained the myſtery.—She addreſſed me thus:—

"Since I laſt ſaw you, Roncorone, Signora Bianca has been talking to me with great earneſtneſs, and I have, in conſequence of it, ſuffered much embarraſſment and anxiety. Though her language ſeemed to me a little harſh, yet I believe ſhe was prompted

prompted by the beſt of feelings and moſt friendly ſentiments. She ſays that your viſits have been too frequent; and that, having never been introduced to Signor Salvini, or ſpoken of by him, ſhe fears ſhe had acted incautiouſly in allowing your introduction to her and me by Signor Alberti. To her remarks ſhe has added ſome inſinuations; ſhe tells me that ſhe diſcovered confuſion in my looks yeſterday, and that your unuſual animation originated from ſome particular cauſe; which cauſe ſhe hinted at, and, at the ſame time, demanded of me what I could not calmly anſwer. You will not be admitted any more till the return of Signor Salvini, which, according to a letter that Bianca received this morning from Vienna, is delayed for another week. When he comes back to Venice, I truſt that I ſhall ſee you again—that I ſhall be allowed to converſe with, and

aſſure you that you are ſtill dear to the heart of

"ROSOLIE VENZONE."

The beginning of this letter filled me with ſorrow and concern; but the concluſion inſpired me with rapture. To be deprived of the happineſs of ſeeing Roſolie was cruel;—to be loved by her, to be *dear to her heart* was, however, a joy that nothing could equal. At the return of Salvini ſhe thought of our meeting again.—Salvini! was it likely that *he* would allow of my viſits, ſanction my love, or approve of my propoſals?

Roſolie was a ſtranger to the affair between my father and her guardian: I had never told her of it; and as it had taken place at a great diſtance from Venice, and many years had ſince paſſed over, it was no longer ſpoken

ſpoken of, and known but to few. Entertaining the ſentiments which I did for Salvini, could I poſſibly force myſelf upon his notice? Could I humble myſelf to, and ſolicit the man who had deſpiſed, reviled, and attempted to murder my noble-minded father? Impoſſible! So I at firſt thought; but Roſolie being the object, I afterwards acknowledged that I could do any thing for her. My ill opinion of Salvini was merely hereditary; for I had ſeen little of him, heard little of his character; he was, however, reported by my friend Alberti to poſſeſs great pride and inflexibility, which he could occaſionally very artfully cover; and my informer added, that he was a man of ſtrong and violent paſſions. This intelligence certainly was not favourable to my deſigns; but thinking that it might probably be exaggerated, I was reſolved to do

any thing conciliatory for the obtaining of Roſolie.

I had not ſeen her for four days, when I contrived to have a letter conveyed privately to her, in which I conjured her to give me an interview of a few minutes. The bearer of my letter brought me an anſwer:—Roſolie was all tenderneſs; ſhe named an hour when Signora Bianca would be with her Confeſſor, and appointed a place for our meeting at ſome little diſtance from the houſe. I could ſcarcely moderate my joy; I was at the ſpot of aſſignation almoſt an hour before that which had been appointed; my impatience was not to be reſtrained; and I fooliſhly thought the time lagged purpoſely to perplex me.

At length Roſolie appeared, and I caught her in my arms; ſhe trembled greatly, tears were in her eyes, and ſhe was apparently much diſtreſſed.

"I fear,"

"I fear," ſhe cried, "that I am acting with great impropriety; I am treating Signora Bianca with duplicity, and doing what might bring on me diſgrace and opprobrium."

Preſſing the flutterer to my heart—"Rely, beloved Roſolie!" I replied, "on the honour of your Roncorone. Our future meetings will not, I hope, be clandeſtine; and the world is too well acquainted with your virtues to attempt to ſully them. Be compoſed; your agitation is diſtreſſing to me.—Oh how my heart thanks you for this kindneſs!"

I could not entirely quiet her apprehenſions; and ſhe urged me to be brief, as the time that Bianca's Confeſſor continued with her would probably not exceed half an hour. I led her to ſpeak of Salvini, and ſhe mentioned him in high terms, ſaying that he had been the ſteady friend of her father, and

to herſelf very indulgent, kind, and even profuſe; ſhe confeſſed that to almoſt every other perſon he was exceedingly imperious and moroſe; but to her, and particularly of late, ſhe added, he had ſhewn the moſt unbounded affection.

She ſpoke this with great ſimplicity.—I ſtarted—"Moroſe to almoſt every *other* perſon, and ſhewing to you *unbounded affection!*"

"Yes, Roncorone; thoſe ſentiments which he bore for my father, he has transferred to me."

This did not altogether quiet me; I however aſſumed a compoſure; and as I had urged for this meeting, partly to learn from her more fully the character of Salvini, and to inform her of all that I knew reſpecting him, which I had, for ſeveral reaſons, hitherto neglected to do, I begged her to attend with patience to me for a few minutes.

"That

"That my love for my ſweet Roſolie is ſincere as it is ardent," I ſaid, "I think ſhe will not queſtion. If I am to go with her through life, happineſs ſurely cannot be wanting; but ſhould there not be ſuch an union as my heart wiſhes for, to that heart muſt be attached an unfading regret, if not a ceaſeleſs miſery. Roſolie, how am I to attain you?"

"By declaring your ſentiments to Signor Salvini on his return. I owe him much, and to make my union happy, I could wiſh to have his ſanction."

"But what if he ſhould withhold his conſent? Will you give up Roncorone to deſpair and affliction?"

"No!" ſhe replied, with great force.

"Not forſake—not abandon him?"

"Never! I have a ſenſe of Salvini's favours and tenderneſs; I regard him as a

father, and as ſuch reſpect him;—to offend him might make me unhappy; but viewing him as I do, I cannot conſider him as the arbiter of my affections, or as the director of my choice. My heart is your's, Roncorone. Salvini cannot force it into the poſſeſſion of any other man."

Oh! what a confeſſion was this! It made me almoſt extravagant. Relying on her promiſe, I now ventured to tell her of the affair that had formerly taken place between Salvini and my father; and alſo to hint my ſuſpicions that he would, on that account, rancorouſly oppoſe our union. She ſtarted at the intelligence, and ſhewed many ſigns of ſurpriſe; but ſhe ſoon regained her compoſure, and proteſted that whatever might be his oppoſition, ſhe would ever adhere to the declarations which ſhe had then made. She prepared to retire, fearing that Bianca would diſcover

diſcover her abſence; and, in order to avoid ſuſpicion, ſhe wiſhed me not to accompany her home.

"Roncorone," ſhe ſaid, giving me her hand, "I have ſpoken as ſincerity prompted me; but, believing you a man of honour, I fear not a failing in your diſcretion; I confide implicitly in you."

"Then you confide in one," I replied, "who values your perſon and happineſs above every other thing on earth!"

She then left me to my joy, gazing on the beautiful viſions of expectation, and liſtening to the ideal promiſes of hope.* * * * * * * My head ſeems as light as the down of the thiſtle. If a man of reaſon cannot be the guide of his own thoughts, how ſhall Roncorone, who is reputed mad?" * * *

* * * * * * *

Salvini returned to Venice: I was anxious to know the tenor of his ſentiments as ſoon

as poſſible; but Roſolie intimated to me that ſhe wiſhed me not to introduce myſelf immediately to her guardian. Her motives ſprung from delicacy, and I attended to her injunctions, though they ſerved to increaſe my impatience. Roſolie and I were unſeen by each other for ſeveral days, and I ſpoke of my diſappointment to Alberti, and alſo of my anxiety to convey to her a letter, without making it appear to the family in which ſhe lived that ſhe held a clandeſtine correſpondence.

"Say no more, Roncorone," cried the gay Alberti; "at night you ſhall ſee the Madona of your idolatry; and I will undertake to convey any letter to her that you may pleaſe to write, and entruſt to me. I was at Salvini's houſe about an hour ago, when I heard him tell the ſervants that he ſhould be on the water to-night at eleven, and that

Roſolie and Bianca would accompany him. I ſhould know his gondola from a thouſand others, if there were only half a beam of moon-light. What ſay you, Roncorone, to a revel on the waves of the Adriatic? Will you accompany me?"

I acceded to his propoſal with true pleaſure; wrote my letter; gave it to him;—and at ten o'clock went with him to the water. I knew not how he meant to deliver my epiſtle, but he told me to rely on his friendſhip and ingenuity. The paper that I had addreſſed to Roſolie, ſpoke of my recent mortifications and ſolicitude, and entreated her to allow me to introduce myſelf to Salvini without any further delay, in order that I might know whether he ſanctioned or diſcountenanced my addreſſes.

Alberti knew at what place the gondola of Salvini was ſtationed; we therefore ſailed

but

but a little diſtance from it, and waited for the arrival of the expected party. At length Alberti told me he heard the Signor's voice; and directing my eyes to the ſpot that he pointed to, I ſaw Salvini aſſiſting ſeveral ladies into the gondola. My ear caught the muſic of Roſolie's tongue; and the night was ſo clear, that I could plainly diſtinguiſh her figure in the group.

They rowed paſt us; Alberti did not diſcover himſelf, or give any ſalutation; I could ſcarcely refrain from ſpeaking to Roſolie;—but my friend put his finger to his lips as a mark of ſilence, and followed them, though he kept at ſome diſtance. Salvini's party ſeemed in high ſpirits; but Roſolie ſeldom joined in the converſation, or, taking a part in it, ſpoke very faintly. I feared that ſhe was depreſſed and unhappy; and the idea of her being ſo was ſufficient to bring me to her

imagined

imagined condition. We now drew near e to the boat that contained her, when Alberti, having previouſly deſired me to wrap myſelf up in my cloak, took a flute from his pocket, and played a ſolo with ſuch ſkill and delicacy, that he inſtantly attracted the notice of every perſon in the gondola that preceded us.

Perceiving that he had drawn their attention towards him, he whiſpered me to ſtep behind the curtain of a ſmall ſilk canopy;—he then laid aſide the inſtrument, and ſung a canzonet in ſo ſuperior and exquiſite a manner, that he increaſed the intereſt he had at firſt excited.

"Alberti!" cried Salvini, recollecting the voice. The gondolas were now cloſe to each other.

"Signor Salvini," cried Alberti gaily, "cannot you let a man ſhew his gallantry without

without bringing him into immediate notice? Had you ſuffered me to remain unknown, I would have played to you till I cramped my fingers, and ſung you more ſongs than were ever written by Metaſtaſio."

"Join our party," ſaid Salvini, "and then you ſhall hear my apologies."

"I am ſorry," replied Alberti, "that I am obliged to decline your invitation, having an engagement within an hour."

"But your ſong," ſaid Roſolie, "has charmed me; and by ſinging it again, you will give me much pleaſure."

Alberti ſung again, and with increaſed effect; every perſon, except himſelf, was mute, when, peeping from behind the curtain, I ſaw the ſweet face of Roſolie within a few yards of me. Alberti finiſhed the air, and preſented a paper to Roſolie.

"As you like the words," he ſaid, "I will give you a copy of them; your ſmiles will

will ſufficiently reward the poet. Here are copies alſo for your friends; diſtribute them, if you pleaſe. Signor Salvini, I have one left for you; the author is ingenious, but unfortunate; I have promiſed to ſolicit patronage for him, and will ſpeak to you on the ſubject at ſome future time. Good night! pleaſure attend you all!"

Ordering the gondoliers to take us on ſhore, we were ſeparated from Salvini's party;—the preſence of the men prevented me from ſpeaking particularly to Alberti; and when we had left the water, he would allow me only a few minutes' converſation, during which he, however, told me that my letter had been delivered with the verſes, and that it had not eſcaped the notice of Roſolie. He then broke from me, as it was near the time of his engagement, and left me to return home alone.

About

About noon on the following day I received a letter from Roſolie; affection never ſpoke ſweeter words; and ſhe allowed me to place myſelf before Salvini as ſoon as pleaſed. When Heaven formed this woman, ſhe ſurely was not deſtined for the lower world! She was—Ah! why ſhould I torture myſelf by a repetition of her virtues and perfections?

I could not reſt till I had ſpoken to Salvini; but, having to combat with a thouſand apprehenſions, I knew not in what manner to addreſs him. My father roſe in my mind, and contempt was forming for his enemy; conſcious, however, that any expreſſion or appearance of diſguſt would weaken my cauſe, I at length determined to bear myſelf with apparent reſpect, as I relied on the conſtancy of Roſolie, and hoped that

that Salvini would place no barrier between us.

Roſolie's letter had not reached me more than an hour when I availed myſelf of her permiſſion, and haſtened to her guardian's houſe. He was at home, and without any engagement;—having ſent my name to him, and requeſted an interview, contrary to my fears, he readily granted it; and in a few minutes after entered the room into which I had been ſhewn.

"I entreat your permiſſion, Signor," I ſaid, "to addreſs you as the guardian of Roſolie Venzone?"

"You have it," replied Salvini, without expreſſing much ſurpriſe.

"After this requeſt, you will probably conjecture the cauſe of my now appearing before you?"

"Were

"Were I to do ſo," he anſwered, "I might be led into error; you will therefore pleaſe to explain it fully, Signor—Signor—"

"Roncorone is my name," ſaid I, looking earneſtly at him.

"True," cried Salvini, with a changing countenance, and with eyes ſcarcely able to ſhut up his indignation, "I would have you proceed, Signor Roncorone."

"I truſt that a detail of circumſtances is not neceſſary. I ſhall briefly ſay, that I have lately attached my heart and its affections to Roſolie, your ward. I love her truly and ardently; to attain her would, I think, make me eternally happy; but to be kept ever apart from her would, I fear, be ſtripping life of all its choiceſt comforts."

I pauſed, but Salvini not ſpeaking—

"Harbouring theſe ſentiments," I continued, "and indulging thoſe good hopes which

which are generally allied to our wiſhes, I now preſent myſelf before you, Signor, to entreat that you will countenance my affection, and alſo allow me intercourſe and correſpondence with Roſolie. I am informed that you have, for many years, ſtood in the place of, and acted as a parent to her; I conſider myſelf, therefore, as now addreſſing you in that character, and hope that my preſent application will not be unſucceſsful."

Salvini carried his eyes from my feet to my head, and I thought I ſaw contempt hanging on his lips; but the placid manner in which he afterwards ſpoke, led me to believe that my ſuſpicions had done him injuſtice.

"Pray, Signor," he ſaid, "is Roſolie acquainted with the nature of your ſentiments?"

"I have made them known to her."

"And

"And ſhe approves them?"

"She has made me happy, very happy, in telling me ſo."

"And ſhe has, I preſume, referred you to me?"

"Yes, ſhe gave me her permiſſion to ſpeak to you on the ſubject."

"Signor Roncorone," ſaid Salvini, "I have an engagement that prevents me from enlarging our converſation at this time.—Though I have been the protector of Roſolie, who, in her younger days, was conſigned to me by her father, yet my power as a guardian is limited. Your acquaintance with her has been ſhort; congenial diſpoſitions, however, ſpurn at the reſerve that cuſtom has eſtabliſhed, and ſoon open to each other. I have a ſenſe of the honour done to me in being conſulted, but can only ſay, that Roſolie muſt determine for herſelf; in

you

you expect a more particular reply from me, you muſt firſt allow me to ſpeak with the Signora. Call on me on Monday morning, and we will then, if you pleaſe, renew the ſubject."

He roſe.—I bowed to him as I left the room, and was conducted to the door. Inclined to think that the ſentiments of Salvini were in my favour, and that he regarded me not with malice for being the ſon of Roncorone, my hatred for him was ſoftened;—and though I had ſaid to Alberti that Salvini and I muſt never meet, yet Roſolie cauſed me to think myſelf not degraded by the advances which I had made to him. I was not then acquainted with the extent of the villain's hypocriſy.

Relying on the love and conſtancy of Roſolie, as well as on the approbation of Salvini, what expectations did I harbour!

What

What beautiful proſpects burſt upon my imagination! Credulous, credulous Roncorone!

As Salvini had neither conſented to, nor oppoſed my ſeeing Roſolie, I knew not what to do in regard to going to her again; but as three days only had to elapſe before I was to wait on her guardian, I endeavoured to content myſelf by writing to her an account of my recent interview. On the Monday I went to Salvini's houſe, and was ſoon brought before him; I bowed reſpectfully as I approached him; my ſentiments were not ſo harſh as they had formerly been; and though I did not actually eſteem him, yet I no longer hated him.

He did not receive me warmly, and the expreſſion of his eyes was not underſtood by me: I thought, at one time, they glanced malignity; but the ſmile that immediately followed

followed, again ſoftened my ſuſpicion. His face was often varying its colour; and though a calmneſs ſeemed to preſide over his features, I could eaſily perceive that it was affected. I wiſhed him to open the converſation; but finding him not inclined to do ſo, I began to ſpeak of the object of my preſent viſit, and he heard me with an unmoved countenance.

"Signor Roncorone," he ſaid, "are you *ſure* that the poſſeſſion of Roſolie Venzone would make you permanently happy?"

"I hope—I truſt it would," I replied warmly.

"She is not rich, Signor."

"I am not in ſearch of fortune," I anſwered, ſomewhat hurt at his manner of ſpeaking theſe words.

"Since I ſaw you laſt, Signor Roncorone, I have well conſidered your propoſals and

intentions; and having the happineſs and *proſperity* of Roſolie at my heart, you muſt allow me to ſay that I cannot ſanction your further addreſſes."

"Signor! do I underſtand? Did you not on Thurſday give me flattering encouragement?"

"Encouragement! No; I only begged for time to think of the affair: I *have* thought of it, and repeat, Roſolie cannot be your's with my approbation."

"Aſtoniſhing! and the reaſon?"

"The incompetence of your fortune, and your want of rank."

"And have you no other motives?"

"None;—no other—theſe are ſufficient."

"Recollect—do you now view me in my own character, or as the ſhadow of ſome one gone by? Is not your rejection guided by

by principles which have been long rooted, rather than by ſentiments of a recent date ?"

" You ſpeak enigmas, Signor," ſaid Salvini, with a reddened face.

" And if I do," I replied, " I will not put you to the unpleaſant taſk of giving them ſolutions. You reject my propoſals ?"

" I do. As the object, therefore, is not to be obtained, I would adviſe you to root it immediately from your memory."

" Your advice is too unimportant for my acknowledgments ; the object *is* to be, *ſhall* be obtained. Roſolie has a will of her own."

" And have I no influence as her guardian ?"

" None ſufficiently ſtrong, I hope, to alter thoſe principles which I know her to poſſeſs."

" But with the principles which ſhe *does* poſſeſs," he ſaid, " you probably are not well

acquainted. I have converſed with her concerning you, and told her that my approbation would never attend her union with you."

"You *have?*"——

"I have. She liſtened to me patiently; and, by the manner in which ſhe received my determination, I am led to believe that ſhe can obliterate the ſlight impreſſion you have made, without materially affecting her happineſs."

"Signor Salvini," I exclaimed, almoſt ſwelling into paſſion, "you are ſpeaking a direct and groſs——No matter—you are deceived.—Roſolie loves me; and I am aſſured that ſhe would not deny it to you.—The day of our union is not far diſtant, and I ſhall ſoon remove her from your houſe.—We thought it moſt reſpectful to apprize you of our intentions; but as you would unwarrantably

fantably impede them, I am happy that your power does not extend to your wiſhes."

Salvini ſeemed endeavouring to ſmother his flames:—"I told you at our firſt meeting, " he cried, " that my power as a guardian was limited; but I now confeſs it is leſs ſo than you may imagine."

" You *can* then ſtep aſide from veracity? You confeſs it, worthy Signor Salvini!"

" Leſs irony, and more reſpect, if you pleaſe. I have a paper in my poſſeſſion, given me by Venzone, the father of Roſolie, ſome few hours before his death, in which he enjoins her to ſubmit herſelf entirely to my direction, and, in the article of marriage, to rely implicitly on my guidance and approbation. If ſhe ſpurn at theſe commands, I have yet to learn her character."

I ſaw through this ſhallow artifice, and looked on him as a contemptible liar!

was difficult for me to ſuppreſs my rage, and ſtifle the indignation that had been raiſed by the hypocritical dotard. His attachment to women was notorious, and his looſe amours were generally known; but to think of making the blooming Roſolie his wife—the child of his friend—eighteen to fifty!—Contempt gave way to mirth, and my rage was diſſipated by a hearty laugh.

Roſolie wrote to me again on the following day; and, by the manner in which the letter was conveyed, I aſſured myſelf that Salvini had no knowledge of her correſpondence with me. I found that he had once more been enforcing his paſſion, had offered to her half of his fortune, laid jewels before her, and vowed eternal love and tenderneſs!

"He alſo ſpoke of you," added Roſolie; "but in a manner which made me deſpiſe him;

him; for he depreciated abilities which he cannot himſelf boaſt to poſſeſs, and ſtrove to cloud thoſe virtues which are ſuperior to his nature. He has ordered his ſervants never to admit you again;—come, however, on Thurſday morning, at the hour of ten; do not be repulſed; go immediately to his ſtudy, with which you are acquainted, and where you will probably find him. Tell him you are come to demand me of him;—but controul as much as poſſible your paſſions, and do not hint at the propoſals which he has made to me. I ſhall be apprized of your arrival by a girl who attends me; I will come to you immediately, bid Salvini a laſt adieu, and ſhew you how much I confide in your affection and tenderneſs. The rigid and unimpaſſioned may cenſure us; but in retirement we will ſmile at their malice, and look for no approvers beyond our-

ſelves. Roncorone, we have at preſent an aſſurance of happineſs; and I truſt that the time of its realization is at hand."——

Man is ſubject to ſuch fine ſenſations as language can only coldly deſcribe, and mine were of that nature. I hired a beautiful little retired houſe, and, in the courſe of four days, furniſhed it in a manner which I thought would pleaſe my Roſolie; I placed a man and woman ſervant in it, bought ſome muſic and inſtruments, and arranged the works of her favourite authors in the apartment intended for her uſe; my picture alſo was there, and I had fixed it in ſuch a poſition, that it was ſure to meet her eye on her firſt entrance. My * * * * *

* * * * * *

On Thurſday morning, at the hour of ten, I entered the ſtudy of Salvini, having firſt ſilenced the inſolent murmurs of the porter who

who opened the door, and puſhed aſide an interpoſing lacquey, who ſtood in the hall, and who doubtleſs acted according to the directions of his maſter. Salvini was not there, nor in any of the rooms below. Reſolving to diſpenſe with ceremony, I went up ſtairs, one of the ſervants following me, and looked into all the apartments, which were wholly deſerted.

I was greatly diſappointed, and the fellow who accompanied me, ſneeringly aſked whether I wiſhed to extend my ſearch; but deſiring him to be leſs impertinent, and looking at him as if I would not be trifled with, he put aſide his buffoonery, and informed me that his maſter, Signora Bianca, and Roſolie had left the city the preceding evening.—My vexation was extreme, and I could not conceal it from the attendant, of whom I impatiently enquired whither his maſter was

gone; but the fellow proteſted he knew not, and alſo that he believed every other remaining ſervant was as ignorant in that reſpect as himſelf.

My paſſions almoſt choaked me; but ſeeing how much my diſtreſs pleaſed the low-minded menials of Salvini, and being aſſured that neither he nor Roſolie were in the houſe, I departed from thence with a ſick heart, and an irritated brain.

I was divided between ſorrow and rage, and a thouſand conjectures crowded upon me; many of them extravagant and idle, others in the greateſt degree tormenting, but ſome few of them, on being examined, appeared probable.

"The eyes of mine enemy have been vigilant, and his heart has been ſtoring itſelf, even to fulneſs, with venom. I am hateful to him, becauſe I am the ſon of Roncorone—

becauſe the noble-minded man from whom I ſprang, chaſtiſed him for his lies and cowardice, and placed him in the notice of the world with all his villany on his brow.—He has been watchful over the actions of Roſolie, has employed emiſſaries; he intercepted her letter, in order to apprize himſelf of its contents; and, finding ſufficient time for his envious projects, ſent it to me to embitter the diſappointment which he knew I muſt feel on finding her clandeſtinely removed from me."

"Dear Roſolie, I do, indeed, ſuffer as much as our malignant torturer could wiſh: yet, determined as he ſeems to place a thouſand barriers between us, let me ſtill hope that I ſhall remove them all, and in the moments of ſucceſs and felicity, ſmile on the feebleneſs and impotence of his puny malice. The dotard loves her himſelf, and may have

removed

removed her merely to try the force of his eloquence; to plead a paſſion which nature refuſes to aid, and to talk of love at an age when moſt good men are ſeriouſly preparing themſelves for death.

"Though I am at preſent unacquainted with the place of Roſolie's concealment, I will be active in endeavouring to diſcover it; ſhe will not long be hidden from me; we ſhall meet—we ſhall meet, and be happy, while the hated Salvini is writhing under the torments of a ſelf-accuſing conſcience!"

So I murmured to myſelf as I walked along, endeavouring to ſubdue the paſſion that was then choaking me, and to flatter myſelf that my difficulties would be ſoon and effectually ſurmounted. It was only neceſſary to learn the place of Salvini's retreat, to which, on procuring the information, I reſolved inſtantly to follow, and reſcue

cue from him the beloved object, of which I had, ſome few hours previouſly to my diſappointment, aſſured myſelf of attaining. In my attempt to be tranquil, I could not, however, wholly ſucceed;—I could not entirely quell the tempeſt of my mind, nor think of Salvini without curſing him for his treachery and hypocriſy.

I had not much to fear on Roſolie's account, being acquainted with the ſtrength of her mind, as well as the extent of her affection; I knew that the arts of her guardian, as he miſtermed himſelf, could neither impair her conſtancy, nor ſhake her fidelity; and that, though the precipitancy of his proceedings might, for a little while, alarm, they were not likely to ſeriouſly frighten her. It was ſome conſolation to me that Bianca accompanied her; for I had long ſince diſcovered that the old lady's heart

was

was moſt tenderly attached to her, and that her love was little ſhort of the maternal.

There was yet no ſtability in my mind;—if, for a moment, I liſtened to the voice of hope, in the next, vexations crowded upon me ſo faſt, that patience was beginning to quit me. In this ſtate I ſought my friend and uſual adviſer, Alberti, to whom I was indebted for making me known to my dear Roſolie, and alſo for aſſiſting me in my ſecret correſpondence with her. I haſtened to his houſe, in order to inform him of my diſappointment, and to entreat his advice and aſſiſtance; but my perplexity was increaſed by not finding him at home, and it was late in the following morning before I could obtain an interview with him.

On ſeeing him I haſtily recounted the occurrences of the preceding day, and ſtated the views I had had reſpecting Roſolie, the abrupt

abrupt departure of Salvini from Venice, and the provoking overthrow of the project which I had ſo fondly thought would bring me a large ſtore of happineſs for future years. Alberti was at firſt inclined to laugh at my gravity; but ſeeing my real uneaſineſs, his friendly heart inſtantly admitted ſympathy, and no longer indulged itſelf with mirth.—The admirer of human beauty muſt at all times have been pleaſed with the face of Alberti; the tranſition of his features gave to the imagination the picture of a ſpirit, who either ſmiles or weeps, and whoſe variations of countenance ſucceed as rapidly as the clouds amid which it ſails on its white downy pinions.

"Dear Roncorone!" he exclaimed, with tenderneſs, "excuſe the levity of my nature, for which I often have to bluſh; ſtill it is always in your power to give gravity to my ſubſtance,

ſubſtance, and there is not another man on earth than yourſelf, in whoſe concerns I would ſo willingly engage, and whoſe joys and ſorrows I would ſo readily make my own."

"I thank you, my good friend," I replied; "but I have loſt Roſolie!"

"She is again to be found."

"But how? Tell me how?"

"Certainly not by deſpondency and complaints, but by activity and enquiries."

"The ſervants of Salvini are obſtinate, and not to be bought; I have not had time to ſeek elſewhere, nor do I know where to apply for information. My diſappointment has almoſt ſtaggered my reaſon; and I can ſcarcely act conſiſtently. You, Alberti, muſt aſſiſt me; you muſt endeavour to procure that information for which my ſoul is craving; you muſt aid me in diſcovering the

the place of my Roſolie's concealment, and exert yourſelf in promoting our union."

"I will proceed in my deputation immediately," replied Alberti; "and I think I may venture to bid you rely on the ſucceſs of it. Salvini has a wide circle of friends in Venice, and it ſhall be my buſineſs to worm them all, if it be poſſible. To lock up our projects within our own breaſts, and communicate them to no one perſon, is more often pretended than performed. Salvini has doubtleſs opened to ſome acquaintance; and though he probably ſubjoined an injunction of ſecrecy, yet I know that ſecrecy is but an irritating nettle; and if I only meet with the man who is ſo entruſted, my life on it that I extract from him the myſtery."

"I thank you, I thank you, moſt fervently," I replied.

"Stay

"Stay till I ſhall have done ſomething to merit your thanks, Roncorone; animate yourſelf! The ſtolen jewel ſhall be returned, beaming with a thouſand additional hues and luſtres."

"You are an excellent comforter, Alberti! But have you no conjecture where the retreat of my oppoſer may be?"

"I know of no eſtabliſhed reſidence that he has, except in this city; ſome time ſince he diſpoſed of his eſtate at Ferrara; beſides, if privacy be his motive, as it appears to be, he has certainly choſen ſome remote and leſs frequented ſpot for his abode. He has tranſactions of ſome nature in Germany, which country he has viſited ſeveral times within the laſt four years."

"And thither he has probably conveyed my Roſolie?"

"It may be ſo, indeed."

"I will

"I will go after her—I will purſue her—I'll bring her back from thence."

"Travel not ſo far," ſaid Alberti, "by the vague directions of conjecture; for, ſhould your route commence with error, you might not be able to ſurmount the difficulties which would be attendant on it. Much as I love an ardent ſpirit, I would not be regardleſs of the voice of caution. Be patient for a little while: I will go out now, and make ſome few enquiries; ſhould I procure any information, I ſhall almoſt, on the inſtant, be with you; and in the evening, whether ſucceſsful or diſappointed, you may expect to ſee me. Adieu, dear Roncorone!"

He left me; and I hoped, when I next ſaw him, to hail him as the meſſenger of happy intelligence; I knew his activity of mind and body, his winning addreſs, and eaſy manner of ingratiating himſelf into the affections

affections of all thoſe who liſtened to him; and from theſe qualifications and accompliſhments I augured much that was good and favourable to the cauſe. Endeavouring to rouſe myſelf from the deſpondency that had been gathering around me, I went on the ſame purſuit as my confidential friend; but as I knew not ſo many of Salvini's acquaintance as Alberti did, I hoped my ill ſucceſs would be compenſated by a ſtore of happy intelligence from him within a few hours.

All, on my part, ended in diſappointment; my exertions entirely failed of ſucceſs; and I could not diſcover even a ſlender clue to lead to the information for which I was ſo anxiouſly ſeeking. My paſſions were again becoming turbulent; the name of my malignant enemy *would* gather a curſe as it came from my mouth; and thought after thought ran tormentingly after my faithful

Roſolie.

Roſolie. I was continually watching from the balcony, as long as it was light, for the return of Alberti; but he did not appear before me till ten o'clock, and then the coldneſs of his countenance chilled me.

"What news? what news?" I haſtily enquired; "have you ſucceeded, or failed in learning the route of Salvini?"

"I muſt confeſs," he replied, "that I have been unſucceſsful."

"Unſucceſsful! and made *no* diſcovery?"

"None of importance, though I have been employed ever ſince I left you, and very actively too."

"Alberti," I cried, "the treachery of my enemy will make me mad. My poor Roſolie! how acute her ſufferings muſt be!—Could you learn nothing from the ſervants of Salvini?"

"I really

" I really believe," replied my friend, " that they know not what journey their maſter has undertaken; if they are acquainted with it, I could not perſuade them to divulge it, though I offered the contents of my purſe to every one of them on that condition, and alſo ſpoke to them in the mildeſt terms of perſuaſion."

" And they continued ſilent to this ?"

" Obſtinate as mules in an unfrequented tract.—'They knew not—they could not tell; the Signor had not thought proper to inform them. This was the general jargon from my firſt enquiry to the laſt.'—The gravity and perverſeneſs of the rogues vexed me; and from them I ran to the different houſes where Salvini had acquaintances. There again I was diſappointed: I prefaced my enquiries to the men with politics, and thoſe to the women with flaſhes and antics of unmeaning gallantry:

gallantry: I ſucceeded in getting them all into good humour; but when I aſked the queſtion which induced me to make the viſits to them, I only heard, 'Is the Signor from Venice?—You ſurpriſe me—indeed I know nothing about him.'

"I aſſure you, Roncorone, I have had a tedious day of it: one old lady clacked in my ears inceſſantly full two hours; and the Marcheſa di Caſtello fixed me in a corner of her muſic-room to hear her ſhriek out a ſcore of new airs moſt infernally unharmonious.—I am ſorry, very ſorry that your ambaſſador ſhould return to you with ſuch indifferent ſucceſs."

"Good Heaven!" I exclaimed; "what is to be done? What would you recommend, Alberti?"

"Patience: in the courſe of a few days we may be able to make the diſcovery."

"But, in the meantime," I cried, "my beloved Roſolie may be expoſed to the impertinence of the odious Salvini's paſſion."

"What!" exclaimed Alberti, ſmiling;—"his paſſion? No, no, that is too ridiculous."

"But it is true," I replied; "he has profeſſed to her his love, abſurd as it may ſeem to you; and the man who can call the ſunſhine of benevolence upon his face, and at the ſame time be filling his heart with rancour, is capable of every thing that is degrading, baſe, and vicious."

It was late when Alberti left me; but previous to his departure, he ſtrove to raiſe my ſpirits, and to——"

But pauſe, Roncorone.—A pain ſeizes thy head, and a ſickneſs comes over thy heart. God knows how long thine eyeballs will

will collect the light which his myſterious hand ſhoots over the immenſity of ſpace.

* * * * * *

I endeavour to obſerve the rules of method and unity in my narrative; but if my outlines are broken, kind ſtranger, whoever you are, remember that I am little better than a diſtracted man; often witleſs as the enſnared bird, and ſometimes wild as the mountain torrent that draws dull and ſullen echoes inceſſantly from my ſhapeleſs cavern. God! God! how ſtrange do I appear when ſelf-examined!—Am I on earth? Have I ſubſtance? Do I breathe? or, has the world of ſhadows received me? Am I wandering a ſpirit of miſery? Am I ſuffering purgatory for vices and impurities into which I ran, contrary to the monitions of the ſupreme Father of the Heavens? Theſe are frequently my queſtions: but, at this time, I have no

doubts; let me therefore avail myſelf of the preſent tranquil moments, and proceed.

When Alberti left me, I retired to my chamber; but ſleep and I were at variance, and I took no repoſe from midnight to the dawn of day, when I roſe from the bed on which I had careleſsly thrown myſelf, and let ſome air into my chamber to refreſh me.—The infamous conduct of Salvini aſtoniſhed and diſguſted me the more I thought of it; there was ſuch a poverty in his reſentment, and ſuch a meanneſs in his malice, that I could but regard him as a ſorry and venomous reptile, deſerving to be cruſhed under my feet. His clandeſtine departure, and the privacy obſerved reſpecting it, reduced him to a ſtill meaner object, and plainly ſhewed that he feared the anger which he knew he muſt excite within my breaſt.

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The recollection of my proſpect on the preceding morning, when I went forth to claim my dear Roſolie, only ſerved to make this more gloomy and diſguſting: the fabric of hope was ſhaken; my expected joys, for the preſent, were driven far beyond my reach, and I knew no means of ſpeedily bringing them within it again. I had no fear of either time or diſtance ſubverting the affections of Roſolie; but believed that there was a mutual ſtability in our loves, and that the one was no more capable of change or of duplicity than the other.

The joint enquiries of myſelf and my friend Alberti were as unſucceſsful this day as they had been on the preceding; nothing was to be diſcovered, nor did any circumſtance favour us in our ſearch; the artful Salvini had well-regulated his plan; had uſed great caution in his retreat, and apparently

had not entruſted the nature and cauſe of it to any ſecond perſon. I endeavoured to quell my rage, and alſo to ſubdue my ſorrow; and Alberti ſtrove to conſole me by obſerving, that forerunning diſappointments made the attainment of our wiſhes infinitely more precious.

"Were I ſituated as you are," my friend would ſay, "I would not bend my brows at what you call diſappointments, particularly if, like you, I were aſſured of the conſtancy of my miſtreſs's heart, and the ſtrength of her mind, and that I believed neither of them would fail beneath the petty tyrannies and artifices of her guardian. I ſhould look on my proſpect as on a diſtant rainbow, viewed from an eminence on which the clouds were ſtill lowering, and ſhould truſt that a tranquillity would ſucceed my diſaſters, even as the richer colours are diffuſed from the partial

partial ſpot gradually over the whole horizon. Take my opinions, dèar Roncorone; make them your own; and do not peeviſhly quarrel with Happineſs, becauſe ſhe has left you for a little while to bid good-day to ſome other fellow of the earth."

Thus he talked; I liſtened, and for a ſhort time thought it reaſonable, and that my diſcontent and anxiety had not a ſufficiency of cauſe to reſt upon; but when a week had paſſed over ſince the departure of Roſolie, and ſeveral days of another followed it, I could liſten no longer to ſuch offered conſolations, neither could I reſtrain the rage, nor quiet the grief that alternately ſwelled and agonized my breaſt. The inactivity in which I had remained, was in ſome moments a reproach to me; and I ſometimes formed the extravagant notion of quitting Venice, and beginning a random ſearch; but when

the confuſion of my intellects ſubſided a little, I plainly perceived the abſurdity of ſuch an expedition, which no perſon, poſſeſſing any degree of reaſon, would think of undertaking.

I wonder that the frequent irritations of my mind did not almoſt reduce me to a ſtate of inſanity. Nature had not formed me of torpid matter, but had given to my conſtitution a large portion of fervour, by which my paſſions were too often actuated; and my perplexities, and pangs of wounded affection, were nearly formidable enough to deſtroy the ſprings of my intellects. Although the enquiries of Alberti remained wholly unanſwered, and his beſt expectations had been entirely baffled, yet he neglected none of the offices of friendſhip, but, on the contrary, was more ſtudious in diſplaying them. The diſeaſe of my mind was not much

much amended by his ſolicitude (for which, however, I was grateful to him); and his endeavours to aſſure, comfort, and amuſe me, generally were unproductive of benefit.

He had one morning, about a month after the departure of Salvini, been talking with me a conſiderable time, and was riſing to depart, when my ſervant came into the room, and put a letter into my hand. I looked at the direction—Heavens! the pleaſures of that moment will never be forgotten. I ran up to Alberti, threw my trembling arms around his neck, and burſt into tears of joy.

"She is found!" I exclaimed, "ſhe is found! Here is intelligence of my Roſolie; and it comes from her own hand. Oh dear Alberti! ſhe is found, and by her am I ſummoned to happineſs!"

"Read it, read it!" cried my participating friend.

I ſunk into a chair, broke the ſeal, and haſtily threw my eyes upon the lines; but an obſcurity was placed before them, which, for ſeveral moments, prevented me from deciphering a ſingle ſentence; and I could not diſtinguiſh any of the characters of the letter. When I was a little recovered, I did not ſcruple to let Alberti know all that it contained; he was a ſincere, generous friend, an almoſt brother, and had taken ſuch an intereſt in my concerns, as entitled him to an unequivocal confidence.

I read the letter to him. Crazed as my brain has ſince been, I believe my memory ſtill retains it. In the moments of my ſaddeſt affliction, I repeat many paſſages of it over and over again, and they melt me to childiſhneſs, and make me as tender as the little ones of the herdſmen, who ſtroll into the valley to gather the uncultivated flowers to braid

braid into wreaths for the necks of their favourite kids.—Thus my Roſolie wrote:—

"My hand trembles, my heart is ſwelling in my boſom! My dear friend! my Roncorone! Oh, I cannot write that name without ſhedding many tears; but they are accompanied with a ſenſation which I wiſh not to ſtifle. Theſe are my firſt happy moments ſince I ſaw you laſt, at leaſt ſince Signor Salvini carried me from Venice to this place; from that hour till the preſent I have been prevented from writing to you; and no perſon would liſten to me when I ſpoke your name, except Signora Bianca, whoſe brother has treated me ſo unjuſtly; and even ſhe, poor penſioner on kindred authority! entreated me to deſiſt, though ſhe did it with gentleneſs.

" Oh! how I thought of you on the day I had named to quit the protection of my guardian, for that which you ſo tenderly offered me. I fancied that I ſaw you in an hundred different ſituations — aſtoniſhed, diſappointed, confounded. Salvini then appeared to me a moſt odious creature, and I had not a ſingle good ſentiment to beſtow on him. Dear Roncorone! let me endeavour to account for my diſappearance; but indeed anxiety has ſo preyed upon my mind, that, for ſeveral days paſt, I have felt a giddineſs which has almoſt deprived me of my ſenſes."

" On the morning preceding the day I expected to accompany you to your home, I was in my chamber, arranging ſome trifles for the morrow, and happily thinking of you, whom I conſidered as my beſt and moſt generous friend. My heart was gay; con-

fidence attended my affection; and in the mirror of my mind I ſaw you as a dear and worthy object of honourable love, deſerving of every thing the poor Roſolie could render you back, and of infinitely more than ſhe had means to beſtow. Thus harmonized, and my little concerns adjuſted, I ſat down near the window, when the door of my apartment was opened, and my ſurpriſe greatly excited by the appearance of Signor Salvini, whom I had never been accuſtomed to ſee in that part of the houſe. A foreboding of evil came acroſs my mind: I raiſed my eyes, and, as he approached me, looked in his face, over which was ſpread a ſarcaſtic ſmile, more alarming to me than the frowns and contractions of anger would have been.

"He came cloſe to me, ſeated himſelf by my ſide, and took a paper from his pocket, which he unfolded and peruſed, but in a manner

ner that then led me to ſuppoſe he had previouſly acquainted himſelf with the contents of it.

'Perhaps,' he ſaid, withdrawing his eyes from what he had been reading, 'perhaps my preſent viſit may be deemed an intruſion; this is, I confeſs, a place to which I have not been accuſtomed to follow you;—but had you been leſs ſolicitous to ſeclude yourſelf, there would have been no occaſion for me to diſregard the general rules.'

'Signor,' I replied, 'there have been times when to me you did not think any thing like an apology neceſſary; the daughter of Venzone has not, till of late, been accuſtomed to ſuch ceremony. But if you pleaſe, I will withdraw into another room.'

'With your pleaſure,' he cried, 'I will remain here; the converſation I wiſh to hold with you may ſoon be gone through with;—

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be pleaſed only to inform me what you know reſpecting this letter.'

"He put a paper into my hand, and with confuſion I ſaw that it was a copy of the letter that I had ſent to you, my dear Roncorone. I read it through, endeavoured to collect myſelf, and feeling the glow of reſentment in my breaſt, enquired by what means he had become the poſſeſſor of the original.

'By ſuſpecting,' he replied, 'that you were acting unworthily; and by exerciſing a privilege which caution hinted to me I was entitled to.'

'What!' I exclaimed, 'by intercepting my letter; by breaking the ſeal, and *ſtealing* the intelligence it contained?'

'I confeſs, my gentle ward,' he anſwered ſneeringly, 'that your conjectures fall exactly upon

upon the caſe, and that the means you mention were actually thoſe which I employed.'

'There was not much honour in the action,' I ſaid, rouſed, for the firſt time, to ſpeak to him with acrimony; 'it has, in my eyes, made you appear a new character, and leſs deſerving of the reſpect which I have ever been ſtudious to pay to you.'

'You are very unequivocal,' ſaid Salvini, with a varying colour; 'I did not expect from you ſo open an avowal.'

'Whatever I do,' I replied, 'I can ever avow; and whatever I think, I dare generally reveal. I ſhould be leſſened in my own eſtimation if I were to diſacknowledge what you have charged me with. I wrote the letter to Roncorone, and it is expreſſive of my true ſentiments; I love him, wiſh to be united to him, and to-morrow, as I propoſed, I ſhall give you my laſt thanks, and ſeek for happineſs

pineſs with the man whoſe wiſhes you would oppoſe.'

" Salvini drew ſtill cloſer to me.

'You are deceiving yourſelf!' he cried; 'you ſhall not even ſee him to-morrow; if I can prevent it, you ſhall never ſee him again. Marry Roncorone! my moſt determined enemy! I would rather give you to the jaws of a crocodile, a monſter which is not more cruel or deceitful. Mine you *will* not be; his you never *ſhall* be!'

'Hear me, Signor Salvini,' I cried.

'I will hear you no longer, ungrateful girl! I ſhall leave Venice within a few hours; my ſiſter goes with me, and you ſhall accompany us. I would ſeek for the remoteſt ſpot on earth to place you in, rather than yield you up to Roncorone. Prepare yourſelf, therefore, for the journey, for I am reſolute;

lute; and if I cannot be loved, I will be obeyed.'

"He then roſe. I ſtrove to detain, and to ſpeak further to him; but he put me down on a ſeat, and ſnatching up ſome pens and paper that were lying on the table, he haſtily left the room, and locked me up in it.

"I wiſhed to be reſolute," continued Roſolie, "and to brave his malice; but, dear Roncorone, I thought of you, and tenderneſs immediately filled my heart; aſtoniſhment overpowered me; I could not baniſh the weakneſs I contemned; and ſinking nearly into a ſtate of inſenſibility, ſo I remained a conſiderable time, and till the Signor came to ſummon me for the journey. Starting up, I declared I would not accompany him; but he took me in his arms, and, being very powerful, carried me down ſtairs, and through the garden, and put me in a gondola, by the

ſide

ſide of poor Bianca; he immediately ſprang into it himſelf, and, by his directions, we were rowed from the ſhore. I placed myſelf ſtill cloſer to Bianca, who threw one of her arms around my neck; I knew it were impoſſible to make her hear me without ſpeaking very loud, and therefore did not attempt it; but I felt the tears of the affectionate woman drop on my hand, and could hear her ſtriving to ſuppreſs her ſobs, which ſhe ſeemed to fear would reach the ears of her brother.

"Salvini remained ſilent a conſiderable time, keeping at ſome diſtance from me; at length he drew nearer, and offered me ſome refreſhments, but I refuſed them with a motion of my head only, for I could not ſpeak while my heart was ſo burthened. In about two hours we were ſet on the ſhore neareſt to the city; and I found that Salvini had not neglected

lected his arrangements, for a carriage was waiting for us, and in it we travelled two days before we reached this place, which I found had not been in any manner prepared for our reception. Here have I, ſince that time, reſided a priſoner, with neither books to read, nor writing materials to make uſe of, only in this one inſtance; hearing every hour new inſults heaped upon you, and alſo declarations of love from a man who is older even than my father would have been, had he been now living.

"Oh Roncorone! how many times has my heart been ſpringing towards you!—How many times in an hour have I thought of you, and how many tears have been ſhed by me ſince our ſeparation! Salvini has ſeen my ſorrow, and ſmiled at it; to have my weakneſs reviled and ridiculed, has, in ſome degree, inſpirited me; and when my oppreſſor

preſſor is preſent, I endeavour to wear the maſk of indifference, though, in my boſom, I am actually carrying an almoſt broken heart. Is this our felicity, my dear Roncorone? No, no—let us hope it is yet to come! Poor Bianca is conſiderably indiſpoſed, and in her I have loſt a tender friend; loſt, I ſay, becauſe ſhe is confined to her chamber, and her haughty brother ſo far reſents my conduct, as to forbid my attending her. What a reverſe of manners and ſentiments in this man! He is now ſhewing himſelf to me as a character of which I had no conception, and leading me to believe that there is a ſpecies of hypocriſy which can a long time, even for a ſeries of years, eſcape the eye of vigilance itſelf.

"Dear Roncorone, haſten to me, and ſnatch me from the lure into which I have been incautiouſly betrayed;—in your protection

tion I ſhall be ſecure; theſe inſults will then no longer reach me, and my enemies will have a chaſtiſer. Haſten, dear Roncorone, and releaſe me from this unwarrantable detention. Reſolved to reſent the tyranny of Salvini, I ſeclude myſelf as much as poſſible, accept none of his invitations, and ſeldom converſe with him. Proud, ſtubborn, romantic—ſuch are the terms he fixes to my conduct; and the epithet of ingrate has not been forgotten, but cruelly ſubjoined to them.

"We are living in a moſt retired ſpot, and I was a ſtranger to its name till within a few days, when I learnt it by hearing, from my window, the enquiries of a traveller, directed to one of the peaſants of the village, and alſo the anſwers of the latter. It is a ſmall habitation, nearly environed by mountains.—Bianca told me ſhe had never ſeen it before,

but

but had been informed that it became the property of her brother by the bequeſt of a relation, who has been ſome conſiderable time dead. After thinking of you, my dear friend, all the day, how melancholy it is to view on the eminences the laſt perſon that evening will allow me to obſerve! My eye follows him from the lower to the higher hill; I ſee him leſſening with regret; and when he either winds from my ſight, or is loſt in the twilight obſcurity, my heart will grow ſtill more ſad, its oppreſſions heavier, and ſpreading my hands on my diſturbed boſom, I exclaim—'Oh that yon traveller were Roncorone, coming to remove the ſorrows of his Roſolie!'

"I have been denied the uſe of a pen by Salvini, and I now write to you by ſtratagem. One of the domeſtics of the Signor is a benevolent and humane creature; I have given him

him money for his family, promiſed him larger donation, and he has, contrary to th abſolute commands of his maſter, not onl furniſhed me with the means of writing, bu likewiſe aſſured me that he would conve this letter to you. Good fellow! my Ron corone ſhall be your friend for this!—I am loath to break off, though my paper is nearly filled, and I have uſed the ſmalleſt characters in it. Come to me, Franceſco, as early as poſſible; I ſhall not fail to look every hour in the day for you from my window.—Reſtrain your rage on ſeeing Salvini. There is a ſpecies of beings whoſe unworthineſs is better regarded with a ſilent contempt than with angry invectives; ſuch is Salvini, and *as ſuch* I would have you regard him. God bleſs you! God bleſs you! Oh how happy will be that moment when my tongue ſhall convey ſuch ſounds to your ears; the idea of

our

our meeting gives a thrilling pleaſure to my heart. Adieu, beſt beloved, and moſt deſerving friend of

"ROSOLIE."

Theſe were the words that I read to Alberti, and with emotions nearly ſimilar to thoſe which a parent may be ſuppoſed to feel, whoſe eye feaſts on an account of the proſperity of a favourite child, who had been long conſidered as ſleeping in the earth of a diſtant country, or as lying a ſkeleton in the ſecret caverns of the ocean.

"Alberti!" I cried, preſſing him in my arms, "Alberti! this is one of the moſt joyous moments of my life! I now perceive both the folly of deſpondency, and the comforts of anticipating good. I am re-animated; a new ſpirit has been infuſed into me—it is

in every vein; it hangs on every fibre; it has entered each receſs of my new moulded heart;—ſmile with me on my happineſs! No gravity to-day; for to-day, within the preſent hour, I ſhall ſeek my ſweet Roſolie!"

Alberti did not immediately ſpeak, but he looked very ſtrangely at me.

"*Where* will you ſeek her, Roncorone?" he afterwards enquired.

"*Where!* How ſingular is that queſtion!"

"I muſt obſerve," he continued, "that the letter either does not contain ſuch information as is neceſſary, or that I did not hear you read it. Peruſe the paper again, and ſee if you can diſcover the clue, without which every thing muſt return to its former obſcurity."

I carried my eyes over the letter again.—His remark ſtaggered me—I found not any proper direction. I once more examined it;

his

his obſervation was juſt; and, almoſt frantic, I exclaimed, "There is no direction! there is no particular mention of the place of her reſidence! This new diſappointment will nearly bring diſtraction on me!"

"It is indeed moſt unfortunate," ſaid Alberti.

"Oh, it is inſufferably ſevere!" I cried, ſinking in a chair; "it is too much for my heart—too much for my brain. This letter had given birth to a thouſand new and delightful hopes; it has now ſent into my mind a thouſand apprehenſions, and filled my breaſt with as many pains. The forgetfulneſs of Roſolie is aſtoniſhing; and it muſt neceſſarily bring ſorrow to her, as well as to me."

"She has not been forgetful," ſaid Alberti; "allow me to look at the letter.—She has *not* been forgetful—I ſee through it all. There are new ſtratagems on foot, Ronco-

rone ; new deceits are practiſing on you, ar villany is again directed towards you by yo moſt inveterate enemy."

" What do you mean, Alberti? F Heaven's ſake, tell me what you mean !"

" I will ſtate my opinion, Roncorone, o this ſubject, becauſe I believe it to be juſt.— My conjecture is, that the ſervant in whor Roſolie confided, is a raſcal of hypocriſy an deceit ; and that, aiming at two rewards, h having received one of them with the lette from the perſon who wrote it, on the aſſuranc of conveying it to you, afterwards ſought fo the other by delivering the packet wit which he had been entruſted, and by divul ging, with a feigned appearance of fidelity, a that he knew relating to it to Salvini."

" Speak on," I cried ; " ſpeak on!—Oh I am growing wild with rage !"

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"I ſhall ſay no more," replied my friend, "if you will thus ſuffer yourſelf to be diſturbed by my conjectures."

"I will be tranquil, dear Alberti; pray proceed."

"My ſuſpicion alſo leads to theſe points: that Salvini opened and read the letter; and that, in order to wreak his vengeance on you, to make your ſufferings as acute as poſſible, and to be further revenged on Roſolie for her rejection, he removed the name of the place of her reſidence from the letter; and alſo, ſatisfied that it could not otherwiſe be known to you, in the moments of his triumph forwarded the compoſition, by which he aſſured himſelf of increaſing your pain and concern."

"I do believe, Alberti, that you have fathomed his villany."

"No, that were impoſſible. But I have, I think, ſounded it pretty deeply. One circumſtance ſerves almoſt to verify my ſuſpicions: look at the corner of the letter—it is torn; there had Roſolie written the name of the place in which ſhe is confined; and Salvini had no difficulty in removing it without giving the paper a mutilated appearance, or deſtroying any of its eſſential characters."

"It is plain—it is evident—I ſee it all.—You have ſhewn the villain to me as he actually is, deſigning, malicious, and cruel. As to the minor raſcal, he has faſhioned himſelf by obſervations on the conduct of his employer; and may Heaven refuſe me mercy, if I do not puniſh both of them according to the different degrees of their perfidy and baſeneſs!"

"Ruſh not into the extremes of paſſion," ſaid my friend; "be patient."

"Patient!

"Patient! If the veſſels of my body were emptying, I could not be patient on ſuch an occaſion as this. Oh Alberti! exiſtence never before laboured under ſuch a complication of evils. My heart is ſick with grief, and my brain hot with rage. To take with theſe hands the life of Salvini, I ſhould ſcarcely conſider as a deed againſt the laws of Nature; for can the aſſaſſin be hardly more deſerving of death, than the man that privately tortures the ſoul, and racks the imagination of a fellow-creature, who never did any thing to deſerve his enmity? The wheel has had victims not half ſo culpable, and gibbets have ſuſpended carcaſes of wretches, who, in life, were more virtuous, and in actions more honourable than Salvini. My Roſolie, too——"

I threw myſelf into the arms of Alberti;—and if there be folly in the tears of a man,

ſtill I confeſs I wept. I could liſten to no conſolations, for I had been too often deceived; and therefore entreated my friend to offer me none.

"Can I," I cried, "be in any degree happy or compoſed, when I know my Roſolie to be the captive of Salvini, and even the ſport of his menials? At this moment ſhe may be ſuffering under their united cruelties and inſults; at this moment ſubject to the fulſome love of her autumnal lover—curſes on the dotard! or, freed a while from his deteſtable company, perhaps her eyes even now are wandering with fond expectation over the mountains, to greet the approaches of him who knows not in what ſpot to ſeek her."

"We ſhall, I truſt, diſcover it ſoon, Roncorone."

"Pray, Alberti, nurſe not my ſick imagination with hopes; had I been leſs willing

to

to believe, I had been leſs unhappy. Good Heaven! how ſhall I conduct myſelf? How repel the attacks which are made upon my reaſon? If my anxiety be not ſoon removed, and if the diſcovery of Roſolie be long protracted, I fear a total failure of that vigour and power which ſhould accompany the chaſtiſement of her infamous detainer."

I called my ſervant, and made ſome enquiries reſpecting the letter; but learning from him only that it came in the uſual manner, I turned dejectedly from him to Alberti, who continued with me the remainder of the day, ſtriving, but in vain, to leſſen my concern and unhappineſs.

The next ten days went over, during which, neither I nor Alberti were able to trace Salvini even a ſingle mile;—we again went among his acquaintances, again applied to his ſervants; it was not, however, to any

purpoſe that we did ſo, for our efforts in every quarter were repulſed. All of them wondered where Salvini was; but none of them knew, or would acknowledge it. Many wiſhed to be informed why I ſo often enquired concerning it, and others inſinuated that my motives were not hidden from them. Sick, feveriſh, and diſguſted, I kept myſelf more at home, well knowing that Alberti would be active in my behalf; and at the end of another week a ſecond letter from Roſolie was put into my hands.

I uttered an exclamation of joy when I received it; but, fearing to diſcover a ſtratagem ſimilar to the one that had been before practiſed, my heart almoſt immediately ſunk, and I unfolded the paper with conſiderable agitation. The ſhape of the paper was perfect—it was perfect!—that gave me a momentary pleaſure; but the rapid idea of her thinking

thinking it unneceſſary to name the place a ſecond time, again nipped the expanding bud of hope. This was her letter; I repeat it from memory only:—

"What can poſſibly occaſion your abſence, Roncorone, ſince I have apprized you of the place of my reſidence, and told you, that to ſee you was my moſt anxious wiſh? When I laſt wrote to you, what a ſcheme of happineſs did I form! The injuries I had received were almoſt buried in the hope of our meeting; I nearly forgot my confinement, noticed not the ſarcaſms of Salvini, and ſcarcely thought myſelf unfortunate.—Circumſtances, I would ſay, in privacy, have been rather unpleaſant; Salvini has, it is true, acted unjuſtly and abſurdly; he has, for a while, protracted my happineſs, but to

deſtroy it wholly was beyond his capacity, though not his wiſhes; and ſince I have partly ſucceeded in undermining his project, within ſome few, ſome very few days, I ſhall be bleſſed with my tender and affectionate Roncorone!

"And are you ſuch, dear friend? You were both when laſt I ſaw you; and I hope you have not ſince changed like the thoughtleſs ones of this uncertain world! If you have, farewel, firſt and only man of my love! Retire from me for ever; pity me, if you do not eſteem me; uſe not the tones of ridicule when you ſpeak of me, nor ſuffer the companions of your mirthful hours to ſport with my name, as they would with that of a woman deſerving of contumacy for her follies and inconſiſtencies. Yet why this caution to Roncorone? To him who has ſpoken ſo nobly, looked ſo tenderly, ſighed over my misfortunes,

misfortunes, vowed affection, and who is ſo widely known to be the ſon of Truth and Virtue.

"Oh Roſolie! thou art unjuſt, and thy ſuſpicions are ſlanderous. Pardon her, Roncorone, pardon her for theſe unworthy thoughts! She muſt be judged by thee; but when thou findeſt that her very ſin ſprings from the ardent love ſhe bears for thee, it ſhall only ſerve to give a milder tone to the words—"Thou art freely pardoned!"

"Perhaps you were not at Venice when I wrote to you; perhaps you are not there now. Are you yet uncertain of my fate?—Are you ſeeking for me? Unfortunate indeed if neither of my letters ſhall reach you! You may be ill; incapable of coming to me; preſſing the bed of ſickneſs! Good God! how am I tortured by conjectures! Let me ſuppoſe that you *did* receive my letter; but

then, the tears that fell on it might blot out the place which I mentioned as that of my captivity. I will now, however, be more circumſtantial, ſo as to prevent future miſtakes, if any have before ariſen."

"The village in which the houſe ſtands, is called ———." [Here a word had been written, but it was eraſed, and no other put in its place. I ſhivered with the fear of freſh villany, and continued to read with dread.]—"It is a remote and ſolitary place, and may be wholly unknown to you; I am informed that it is three leagues from the town of——" [Another eraſure, and another ſhaking of my frame ſucceeded.]—"Salvini viſits no perſon, nor does he appear to have any ſociety or acquaintance around him; nobody demands admittance at his door, out of which he often paſſes, though poor Bianca, who, kind creature! is much recovered, and myſelf

ſelf never ſee beyond the mountain on which ſtands the little village of———. [Here ſeveral words were purpoſely defaced by blots, beneath which nothing was viſible.—'Execrable villain!' I exclaimed; 'for this new inſult I will deal out to you a double portion of vengeance.'—It was ſome time before I could look at the remainder of the letter, which ran thus:—]

"And now, dear Roncorone, having given you theſe full directions, which I have been enabled to do by the kindneſs of the ſervant who favours my correſpondence with you, let me, Oh! let me live in the fond expectation of ſeeing you ere many days ſhall have paſſed away. If you ſhould not appear, a thouſand forebodings will lie upon my mind; I ſhall conjecture what I dare not repeat, and Salvini then, I fear, will triumph over my ſubdued ſpirit. But let him exult; let

let him ſmile on the ſtate to which he ſhall have reduced me: yet never, never ſhall he bring me to his purpoſe of making me his wife, though there ſhould be no alternative between that and death. His wife! I would wrap myſelf in a ſhroud, and patiently await the moſt lingering diſſolution of body before I would conſent to it.

"Bianca has been commiſſioned to ſpeak to me in behalf of her brother: But ſhe was a feeble and an unwilling proxy; ſhe pleaded by compulſion, and while ſhe was converſing with me, her agitation was even greater than mine: ſhe ſobbed on the boſom which ſhe feared to wound; and ſeeing my diſtreſs, declared that nothing ſhould ever again induce her to enter upon ſo hateful a ſubject. She is a worthy creature, and I often mourn that ſhe ſhould be dependant on a moroſe brother. Roncorone, my humble friend could procure only one ſheet of

paper

paper to-day; for that, however, I was truly grateful, and I doubt not but that you will be the ſame when you receive theſe further aſſurances of my health and affection.—How I love the good fellow who will forward this to you! He ventures every thing for me. Should the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion ariſe within the mind of his maſter, he would be driven to beggary. This he has hinted to me; he has alſo informed me that he has a wife on a ſick bed at Venice, with ſeveral helpleſs children around her; and that he can ſcarcely ſupply them with the means of ſubſiſtence. Almoſt all the money I could command, I have given to him; when you and I meet, he ſhall not be forgotten—when we meet!—My grief is returning—Heaven bleſs you, Roncorone, and direct you in ſafety to your affectionate

"ROSOLIE."

Such

Such was the compoſition of the ſecond letter of my beloved girl;—of my feelings on this occaſion I ſhall only ſay, that they alternately roſe from love and rage; that I was now melting into tenderneſs, and then treading almoſt on the verge of madneſs.—The infernal project of Salvini and his minion agonized and confounded me; I could not find curſes enough for them; and I could have regarded the elder devils with more reſpect and charity than theſe fiendlike mortals. The audacity of the principal agent I thought wonderful, and apprehended that he meant I ſhould never ſee him again; for I could not ſuppoſe that he would have the temerity to encounter with me after ſuch baſe and unprecedented conduct on his part. This, however, was a chilling reflection, and ſerved to place a world between me and my Roſolie. If I did not admit this conjecture,

many

many things would appear ſtranger than they had done before. Why did he ſuffer thoſe tender paſſages, which were ſo ſweetly expreſſive of her affection, to remain? Why not ſtrike out thoſe parts which related to Bianca, and threw a moſt odious ſhade upon his character? And why not obliterate the ſentences in which his name was mentioned with diſguſt and contempt, and which placed his wintry paſſion in a ridiculous point of view?

Theſe were myſteries which I could not expound; his plans appeared as awkward as they were malicious, and as inconſiſtent as they were villanous. My diſappointment and miſery he evidently aimed at; but, at the ſame time, he had not, with that ſpecies of cunning which characterizes many of the baſer compoſition, endeavoured to heighten my diſtreſs, by caſting the rainbow colours of

of ſucceſs upon his own projects, or by contraſting my defeat with his own victory.—I began to fear that the world contained not another man ſo dangerous, treacherous, and hypocritical. I almoſt felt a ſorrow to think that the ſword of my father did not reach his heart, and empty it of its corrupted blood. For Roſolie I ſhuddered; poor Bianca, too, was an object of my concern; and I doubted not but that the inſults they had received, would be increaſed tenfold, ſince their oppreſſor had poſſeſſed himſelf of the letters of the former, which were ſure to make the ſentiments and actions of the latter, contrary and oppoſite to his own, fully known to him.

Repeating the vow of enmity and revenge, I ſwore, whenever we met again, to deal out to him an ample portion of vengeance; that the injuries of Roſolie, of Bianca, and of myſelf ſhould be all conſolidated and anſwered

for

for at one time, and on one account.—Scarcely ſenſible of the tenor of my actions, I haſtened to the houſe in which Alberti reſided; I wanted to impart to him my new diſtreſſes; but, on enquiring for him, learned that he had gone from Venice in the morning, to be abſent ſeveral days, and not left any direction behind him.

I thought his abſenting himſelf from me at a time like this, and when he was apprized of the ſtate of my mind, was in ſome degree unfriendly; for we had been ſuch free participaters of mutual joys and ſorrows, that I was now more ſenſibly affected by his conduct, though in a happier ſeaſon I ſhould not have noticed it; and I was ſo unjuſt and precipitate as to accuſe him of inſtability.—But on my return home I had cauſe to be aſhamed of my ſuſpicions, to make a ſpeedy recantation, and to regard my ſuſpected aſſo-

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ciate as one of the moſt worthy of my fellows, as my moſt aſſiduous and active friend on earth. I bluſhed at the meanneſs of my thoughts, and was vexed by their illiberality, when a letter, written by him, and directed to his "dear friend Roncorone," was delivered to me by my ſervant. I had ſtill further cauſe for repentance when I read it; I had alſo cauſe to quiet my ſorrows, and to take the flatterer, Hope, often as I had been her dupe, again to my boſom; for Alberti informed me that he thought he had found a clue leading to Salvini's retreat—that, knowing my impetuoſity, and not being wholly certain of the truth of the report which had been given him, he had been unwilling to ſend me forward in a ſearch that was as likely to be ended with diſappointment as with ſucceſs.

"The

"The diſtance I am going," he ſaid, "is not very great: expect my return in the courſe of a few days; but, if it be prolonged to a week, be not unneceſſarily concerned.—When I ſee you again, Roncorone, be prepared to receive happy intelligence with a temperate pleaſure, or an account of my unſucceſs with fortitude. Scarcely half an hour has elapſed ſince I obtained the ſlender information on which I am beginning my purſuit; to ſerve you, my friend, my brother, I am ever anxious; two of the elements I would at any time traverſe for your ſake; a third I would brave for your preſervation; and though in the other I have no poſſible capacity, yet the animating ſpirit of intellect ſhould follow you even thither, reſtleſs ſtill to communicate and to be familiar with you. I go, Roncorone;—Proſperity, waft me thy gales

gales to the neareſt ſhore, and afterward attend me in the paths which I may tread."

A perſon inclined to ſuperſtition, and experiencing ſuch a rapid ſucceſſion of painful and pleaſing events, might have ſuppoſed that the good and ill ſpirits of the inviſible worlds were contending to whoſe power he ſhould be ſubject, and by whom controuled. Though I was leſs extravagant in my imagination, yet I thought the occurrences which preſſed on me were moſt extraordinary and uncommon;—how they might terminate was a perplexing myſtery; but I was willing to believe that happineſs—Ah! man is ever an egregious dupe, the dupe even of himſelf!

A father wiſhes not to ſee his firſt unborn offspring more than I did to ſee Alberti. He was not returned on the fifth day after his departure; he did not come back on the ſixth. When at home, I was continually looking from

from the door and the windows; if I were walking in the ſtreets, my eyes examined every paſſenger, and were directed into every carriage, in the hope of encountering the expected meſſenger; and I heard not the daſhing of an oar without wiſhing that it were aſſiſting in bringing my friend to me. On the eighth day he was in my arms! I looked haſtily in his face; it was animated, beaming with pleaſure; ſucceſs ſhone through his eyes; and as I ſtrained him cloſer to my breaſt, I found his heart beating the lively tune of joy.

"Is ſhe found?" I enquired, with a rapid voice.

"She is found," he replied.

"Thank God! thank God!" I exclaimed, ſinking from his embrace, and burſting into tears. Alberti did not coldly check the impulſe, but, by his ſweetly ſor-

rowful eyes, I ſaw that his electric ſoul had caught thoſe emotions which flew from mine.

" Be tranquil, dear Roncorone," he cried, after a pauſe of ſome minutes; " be tranquil, and liſten to what I have to ſay. I bring you tidings of happineſs, not of ſorrow."

" My agitation," I replied, " is not the effect of ſorrow; it is cauſed by the too ſudden burſt of joy, but it is going over. Tell me of my Roſolie, and all will be well: begin, begin, my friend—I am wholly prepared."

" On the morning that I left Venice," he ſaid, " I was talking with the Count di Caſtello, and amongſt other topics the diſappearance of Salvini was introduced. The ſubject indeed had, within the laſt few days, become very general; and expreſſing my ſurpriſe at ſo private an occurrence, and ſaying I could wiſh to know to what part of the country

country he had withdrawn himſelf, the Count informed me that a friend of his had very recently, from the window of an inn, ſeen Salvini walking in the ſtreets of Trent, though, from the ſimplicity of his dreſs, and altered garb, the obſerver did not at firſt recognize him. I ſeemed to liſten to this intelligence without any great degree of concern, though I was at the ſame time much intereſted, and highly buſied in forming a project, even while the Count, who, you know, is but a toilet butterfly, was indulging himſelf, and, as he thought, gratifying me, with the vapid amours and idle garbage of affected libertiniſm. I broke from him, however, as ſoon as poſſible, and haſtened towards my home. In my way thither I paſſed by the door of Salvini's houſe, from which I ſaw a porter going with a hamper on his ſhoulders; and as I walked behind

him in the ſtreet, perceived a direction
large characters on it, to Signor Caſtelv
at Trent. 'This is probably the aſſu
name of Roncorone's enemy; this may p
haps lead me to a diſcovery of ſometh
worth ſeeking for.'—So I ſaid to myſelf,
went homewards, being fully reſolved, wi
that very hour, to leave Venice, and ſe
for Salvini at the place to which the Co
had referred me, and to which this diſco
alſo pointed."

"I thank you from my ſoul!" I cried
"pray proceed."

"I knew that uncertainty would acc
pany me in my route, and therefore w
not aſk you to join me in it; I thought
another ſerious diſappointment of hope
repeatedly created and extinguiſhed, w
be too weighty for your philoſophy; an
my expectations and apprehenſions

ne

nearly equal, I conceived it to be more prudent to keep you in a ſhort ſuſpenſe at home, than to carry you a conſiderable diſtance from it, when the accompliſhing of my purpoſes was ſo very precarious."

"It was kindly thought, my generous Alberti; go on, I beſeech you."

"Having written my note, and diſpatched it to you, in a few minutes after I was on the water, and in leſs than two hours was put on ſhore. I then began my journey, and after ſeveral perplexing delays and difficulties, arrived at Trent, where I immediately commenced my enquiries: the name of Caſtlevetro was not, however, known by any perſon to whom I applied, though I was directed to a barber whoſe appellation differed only in one letter. It was from the poſtmaſter I learned that a packet, directed to Signor Caſtlevetro, had been ſent to the

houſe; that a perſon had called and taken it from thence, and deſired, that in caſe any others ſhould arrive, that they might be forwarded by a courier to him at B———, a remote village about eight miles diſtant from Trent. A deſcription of his perſon highly flattered me that it was Salvini; but preferring facts to conjectures, I went forward to the place which the poſtmaſter had mentioned, a very obſcure ſpot among the mountains, to find which I was compelled to engage a guide, who brought me to it juſt at the cloſe of day. I was conducted to a wretched inn, and the firſt perſon I ſaw there was the raſcally ſervant of Salvini, mentioned by Roſolie in her letter; my indignation riſing, I was ſtrangely tempted to ſqueeze the villain's throat; but prudence forbade it, and I walked, with my face nearly hidden, through the room in which he was fitting, deſiring

deſiring my hoſt to conduct me to the chamber in which I was to ſleep—a place tenanted by vermin, and moſt vilely ſcented. The landlord had ſcarcely withdrawn when I heard the voice of the hypocritical ſcoundrel, with which I was well acquainted, enquiring how much he had to pay, and ſaying that he was obliged to depart, as his maſter would be expecting him in half an hour. From this it was evident that Salvini's reſidence was not far diſtant; it was clear and ſatisfactory that my purſuit had not been vain, and therefore, when the landlord brought up my odious ſupper, I aſked no queſtions, in order that I might create no ſuſpicions."

"You were perfectly conſiſtent," ſaid I; "but my Roſolie! pray go on."

"I was undetermined in reſpect to what I ſhould further do in this buſineſs. I wiſhed to go boldly to Salvini, to make your in-

juries my own, and to bring back your Roſolie with me to Venice; but I thought it probable that, if I incenſed Salvini, he would defeat the whole of my project, by a more obſtinate ſecluſion of the principal object; and alſo that I might rouſe the beaſt, without being able to ſubdue it. I determined, therefore, privately in the morning, to leave the village, haſten back to you with all poſſible ſpeed, and leave you to act as your judgment might prompt you. I have done ſo, and hope you approve my conduct."

"Approve! I cannot tell you how much I am indebted to you," I replied; "I cannot explain to you the nature of my heart's gratitude; it is ſuperior to any thing that I ever before felt for benefits received.—Within this hour will I leave Venice, and purſue the path which you have lately trodden:—happy, happy Roncorone, to find

that

that it will lead to Roſolie. Alberti, I will not requeſt you to accompany me; I would not make you an object of Salvini's malice, and I confeſs I wiſh to meet my dear girl alone: on my return, however, I ſhall expect to ſee you, and alſo that you will be preſent at the nuptials of me and Roſolie, which I ſhall preſs to have immediately performed. You find that I make ſure of obtaining her: Salvini *ſhall* deliver her up; he ſhall reſign either her or his life; and even when I have releaſed her from his power, his inſolence and contumacy muſt be accounted for."

"Proceed to no violence," ſaid my friend; "ſpare the reptile when it is no longer venomous."

He gave me ſome further cautions, which I liſtened to, and generally approved. At parting, he wiſhed and aſſured me of ſucceſs, and very ſoon after I ſet out on my deſign.

* * * * * *

Would you, ſtranger, have a circumſtantial account of my journey? I will give it to you if my wits allow me; but if they ſhould fail, I cannot account for inconſiſtencies.

Though the diſtance to Trent ſeemed long, yet the way to it was pleaſant. I met no travellers whoſe faces I thought looked more lively than my own: none appeared to go forward with ſo much ardour; none, I conceived, expected to find ſo precious a treaſure at the different places of their deſtination. So near to my Roſolie! within a few miles—My heart was almoſt burſting from my boſom, and the exceſs of my joy more than once betrayed me into tears.

I reſted only a few hours at Trent, and then went forward, as directed by Alberti; but as it was early day, I relied on receiving neceſſary information acroſs the mountains, and therefore did not then provide myſelf

with a guide. After leaving the town, however, I found the road more difficult than I had ſuppoſed it to be, and was obliged to hire a director to ſhew me acroſs one or two of the eminences; but as ſoon as he pointed out to me the brow of a hill, which he deſcribed as riſing immediately above the village to which I was going, I diſmiſſed him with an ample reward, becauſe my feelings were making me unfit for his obſervance.

I could not, at a time like this, pay much regard to either the beauties or the wonders of nature, though the ſpot was entirely new to me. The mountains wore gigantic forms; but an advanced ſpring had made them, in many parts, beautiful, lively, and refreſhing to the eye; the higheſt of them, however, in ſpite of the approaches of ſummer, ſtill ſtubbornly retained their hoods of ſnow, coyly refuſing to yield to the influence of

the ſun, though they could neither withdraw themſelves from his notice, nor ſhun the daily courtſhip of his rays.

Still nearer to my Roſolie — ſeparated from her only by one hill! I was moſt anxious to reach its ſummit, and improved my pace, after having left my tired horſe at a little inn, which I ſuppoſed to be the ſame where my friendly Alberti had ſeen the pretended aſſiſtant of Roſolie. My blood now ſeemed to flow more rapidly, and I could ſcarcely regulate my paſſions; I began to diſregard the cautions which Alberti had given me, in reſpect to my conduct on ſeeing Salvini, and thought it ſcarcely poſſible to meet that unworthy being without beſtowing on him more than reproaches. I reſolved, however, that the ſtate in which I found Roſolie ſhould determine every thing; I conjectured what the ſtate of her mind was, and

and thought that it would require to be ſoothed, rather than to be again diſturbed.

While I was thus thinking, a horſe ruſhed with uncommon violence paſt me, furious, and not to be governed by its rider; the ſoftneſs of the turf had prevented me from hearing its approach, nor did I notice it till its affrighted eyes and briſtling mane were within a few yards of me. The velocity of the beaſt was ſo great, that I could ſcarcely diſtinguiſh the ſex of the perſon mounted on it; it left its foam behind as it madly tore up the ground that lay before it; I dreaded the fate of the horſeman, and thinking his death inevitable, my breath failed me almoſt as much as his own could do. My eyes followed the animal nearly a quarter of a mile; when, ſhuddering, I ſaw it take a furious leap from the brow of the hill, which I concluded

to

ing around me, perceived him miraculouſl ſuſpended by his garments on the only buſ that grew from the ſide of the precipice, wit his head downwards, and ſupported in th moſt fragile ſtate that can poſſibly be con ceived.

I was on the rack to extricate him from ſituation ſo ſingularly ſhocking, ſo unlik any thing that I had ever ſeen or imagined and the truth of which, had it been relate to me, I ſhould not have been inclined t admit; but no means preſented themſelves and I ſtill conſidered him as doomed to cer tain deſtruction, and to an agonizing death Within a few minutes, however, I ſaw ſhort and very narrow ridge of earth leadin to the ſpot; but as it looked of a crumblin nature, and admitted ſcarcely the breadth o my feet, I found great danger in treading it and for a moment deſiſted from the attempt

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The ſuſpended wretch calling in tones of diſtraction for aſſiſtance, I heſitated no longer, but ventured to walk upon the unſolid earth, though my head ſeemed to whirl upon my ſhoulders as I advanced.

I was ſoon within a yard or two of him:—I could not reach him with my arm, nor was I raſh enough to attempt it; but taking off my upper garment, I graſped one part of it firmly, and told him to catch at the other;—he aimed at it ſeveral times, and at length ſucceſsfully, when I oppoſed my whole ſtrength to his weight, but expected each moment to deſcend with him to the bottom of the cave. Though I am now meagre and ſpectre-like, and though almoſt all my marrow has diſtilled from my bones, yet at that time I had a vigour equal to that of almoſt any man, a body as firmly compacted, and an arm as well nerved. My efforts were moſt

moſt ardent; I had the life of a man to redeem—probably of a worthy and an excellent man!—a huſband, a father! My power increaſed; the ground remained ſolid; and I drew him to my feet; his clothes were ſpread over his face; and finding that he was nearly fainting, I dragged him cautiouſly after me, pulled him to a ſafe ſpot of earth, and ſetting him upright againſt my body, threw the covering from his head.

"Salvini!" I exclaimed, in aſtoniſhment, and drawing myſelf from him.

"Roncorone!" he cried, with a blackened and diſtorted face; "is it you—*you* to whom I owe my life?"

"I have preſerved it, Signor, and am pleaſed with the event, though you have ſhewn yourſelf my biteereſt enemy, and though your actions have been mean and contemptible."

"And

"And I ſcarcely think my preſervation a bleſſing, when I conſider by whom it was effected. Had I known who was extricating me from my danger, I would almoſt as readily have leaped into death, as to have accepted your aſſiſtance."

"Ingrate!" I exclaimed, "I want no thanks; give them to Heaven; render them to God, to whom I am only an humble agent. Your life, as it is, is a worthleſs thing preſerved; mend it, and I may think the moment in which I reſcued you fortunate and happy."

"Roncorone," he replied, "preach not to me in the ſtrains of affected humility;—the counterfeit will not paſs. You knew me before you ſtretched out your arm to my aſſiſtance, and in ſerving me you looked for a latent reward, and thought that I ſhould more readily attend to your ſupplications."

"Supplications!

"Supplications! ſupplications to *you!*—the idea excites my mirth; and though I have lately ſhuddered at your pending fate, almoſt provokes me to laughter."

"Leave me," he cried; "withdraw, and indulge the propenſity apart from me. I never can reſpect either you, or any one bearing your name. Leave me, I repeat, and never ſee me more!"

"Be not ſo haſty, Signor," I ſaid; "the compaſſion which I felt for you is changed into diſguſt, and my concern and ſympathy have given place to contempt and indifference. I look on you with aſtoniſhment; you appear to me ſomething more depraved than I conceived human nature poſſibly could be; and I almoſt think that I ventured too greatly in your reſcue. Had I redeemed the horſe that carried you over the brink, I might have perceived in him as much gratitude."

"I could

"I could have bleſſed and rewarded any other man for the action; but *you*——"

"What of me, Signor?"

"You are baneful to my ſight: your father, before you were born, was my bittereſt enemy."

"Admitting that he were, am I, at this time, to be cenſured for it? But he only chaſtiſed you for cruelty, inſolence, and preſumption. That action which humiliated you, gave a trait of greatneſs to his character."

"'Tis well," ſaid Salvini, riſing from the ground; "boaſt on till you are weary: from this moment I will never ſee you again."

"Stay!" I cried, catching hold of his arm; "ſtay, attempt not to go if you value your life. Do you ſuppoſe that I meet with you now by accident? You have provoked me, Salvini, and I tell you—you are a villain."

"A vil-

"A villain! a villain!"

"Aye, a petty contemptible villain!—You have done me wrong, and ſhall anſwer for it. Why did you oppoſe my union with Venzone's daughter? Why force her from Venice? Why detain her againſt her will? and why, pitiful being, intercept her letters, alter the form of them, and ſend them as new inſults to me?"

"Have I done *all* theſe things?" he ſaid, with extreme agitation.

"You have, you have! Every thing that is baſe and rancorous are you capable of performing. But your machinations have been defeated, your haunts explored, and your evil deſigns diſcovered in a happy ſeaſon. Do you not tremble at your detection?"

"Tremble? No, no!"

"You do, coward! your limbs are quaking, your cheeks colourleſs; the marks of guilt

guilt and of fear are upon your face. But I have now no time to parley: I am come to remove a dear and beloved object from your oppreſſion; yield up to me Venzone's daughter, or your body ſhall be breathleſs before night!"

"I will not yield her up—by Heaven I will not!"

"You *ſhall*, brave Signor; you ſhall reſign her to me, and immediately too. I came purpoſely to convey her hence, and will not be diſappointed, though you ſhould get thouſands to oppoſe me. You love her, Signor! you have poured your vows into her ear! you would plant a delicate flower in the frozen ſoil of winter! But it will not do, Salvini! Prudence, at your age, might have taught you better."

He looked at me with a moſt malicious aſpect, and walked haſtily away; but I followed

lowed him cloſely, kept near his heels, and regulated my paces according to his own.—His villany and ingratitude had rouſed me, and enlarged my veins; I could ſcarcely reſtrain myſelf from laying the hands of violence on him, and almoſt fancied that I was purſuing a fiend, who had merely aſſumed the human ſhape and habit. Several times he turned round, and told me to retire from him: but my project was formed; I was reſolved to take Roſolie from him that very day, and informed him ſo when he deſired me to deſiſt. His countenance now began to vary; it was alternately white and crimſon; he quickened his pace; I likewiſe improved mine, and in about a quarter of an hour we arrived at his houſe.

Caſting my eyes up to a window, I ſaw my Roſolie! I heard her ſcream with joy; the ſound thrilled my ſoul, but I could only hold

up

up my hand to her, as Salvini was then entering at the door. Ruſhing into the hall, he deſired that I might be prevented from following him, and the ſervants were gathering round me; but my words and actions convinced them that I was too reſolute and ſtrong for their purpoſe, and therefore they did not offer to touch me. Enraged and almoſt frenzied, Salvini went into a ſmall room, and with an aſſumed compoſure I accompanied him thither; though my heart was anxious to be near my Roſolie, I reſtrained my impatience as much as poſſible, and endeavoured to be calm and collected in my dealings with my implacable enemy, whoſe fury was increaſing every moment, and who, after a ſhort ſilence, was preparing to leave the room.

Conjecturing what his deſigns were, I told him that, wherever he went, I would follow

him, unleſs he gave Roſolie immediately up to me, and allowed us to depart from him together; but this ſerved only to increaſe his irritation, and, in his frenzy, he flew towards a piſtol, which was lying on a table at the other end of the room. Noticing the premeditated action, I ruſhed upon him, and in an inſtant wreſted the weapon from his graſp. Finding, however, that it was not loaded, I threw it indignantly at his feet, and ſmiled at the fruſtration of his brutality and malice.

"Would you turn murderer, wretch?" I exclaimed; "would you ſtain yourſelf with blood, to make your reſemblance to a dæmon ſtill more complete?"

"Leave the houſe," he cried, "inſtantly leave the houſe! You ſhall repent this inſolence, Roncorone; be aſſured that I will be revenged."

"I have

"I have nothing to fear, Signor," I replied; "there are few men by whoſe threats I could be alarmed; but thoſe which come from ſlackening manhood are apt to excite laughter, rather than to create in me alarm.—Be ſparing, therefore, of your invectives, and hear me with patience."

"I will not hear you; I will hear nothing."

"Nay, but you ſhall, Signor; I no longer ſolicit, I demand. Of your baſeneſs and hypocriſy I ſhall ſay no more; conſcience may hereafter ſcourge you when I ſhall be far diſtant. The purport of my errand is to tell you that Roſolie is no longer your ward. Your power as a guardian ceaſes from this hour; from this hour ſhe is mine."

"Ideally ſo," ſaid Salvini with a ſneer.

"Actually ſo!" exclaimed Roſolie, entering the room, and ruſhing into my anxious arms.

What a moment was that! Surely my ſenſations were as exquiſite as thoſe felt by an angel on ſeeing the ſpirit of a worldly friend newly arrived in the realms of Heaven! Ye who have loved, may fancy it. Sainted woman! the remembrance of that happy period makes my heart——Oh! ſurely the blood is guſhing from it!—Ah, my wife! my martyred wife!"

* * * * * *

I have yielded to my ſorrows four days—it has calmed me—I am now able to proceed.

"Roncorone!" ſaid Roſolie, placing her head upon my breaſt, regardleſs of the preſence of Salvini.

"My love!" I exclaimed; "my Roſolie!"

"Oh

"Oh how happy is this meeting!" ſhe ſweetly murmured.

"Bleſſed! it is bleſſed!" I replied, ſtraining her ſtill cloſer to my boſom. Salvini had ſunk, as if overpowered by ſurpriſe and vexation, into a chair; he eyed us ſternly, and looked as if he could willingly be our murderer."

"Will you go with me now, Roſolie?" I enquired; "will you accompany me from hence?"

"Readily," ſhe replied; "give me only a few moments to ſpeak to Signor Salvini."

She walked up to him with firmneſs, and I went with her, holding her hand within mine.

"Signor," ſhe cried, "perhaps this is the laſt time we ſhall ever ſee each other; for I confeſs that I ſhall never be induced to ſolicit a ſubſequent interview. There was a

time when the idea of leaving you would have been painful; but now I ſhall fly from, and continue to avoid you as a moſt dangerous and cruel enemy. I regard the changes of your character with aſtoniſhment—I add, with diſguſt. Good Heaven! you ſnatched me from danger in my childhood, for ſeveral years acted like a kind and benevolent guardian; yet now, you would not only diſtreſs, but alſo involve me in ruin, in ſhame, and infamy!"

She wept—Salvini trembled—I was enraged, and could ſcarcely refrain from violence.

"You have given me maintenance and education," continued Roſolie, recovering; "and I have many times thanked and bleſſed you for it. Your generoſity always met with my gratitude; every night you had the prayers of an orphan; every night I ſuppli-

cated

cated Providence to ſend you a reward, greater than it was in the power of all the world to beſtow. I was not prompted to this by the forms of ſociety; I had a monitor within my breaſt who told me to do it. Thus far the picture pleaſes; the other part preſents itſelf dark, gloomy, diſguſtful!"

"You are in a fine declamatory ſtrain this morning!" ſaid Salvini, between ſavageneſs and irony.

"Signor," ſhe replied, "the arrows of your ſatire can no longer wound me, my heart is now become invulnerable to ſuch attacks, though a few hours ago you had me ſo much within your power. When we loſe all manner of reſpect for an object, it is not long before we can totally diſregard it; the eſteem which I once entertained for you exiſts no longer, and your name and character I ſhall ſoon give to forgetfulneſs.—

Why you forced me from Venice, I ſhall not now enquire; neither ſhall I aſk why you have ſince haraſſed, perplexed, and inſulted me. Let me, however, inform you, that two nights ago I became acquainted with the low expedients you made uſe of to intercept my letters; you, and the vile being who delivered them to you, were very communicative in the garden; you did not feel any humiliation, at that time, in converſing with the ſorrieſt wretch on earth, a contemptible liar, and plotting villain. You laughed, Signor, at your ſucceſſes; I heard it all from the window of a room into which, though forbidden, I had entered; I heard alſo the plan of your premeditated deſigns and treacherous intentions!"

"What deſigns?" ſaid I, ſtarting; "what intentions, my Roſolie?"

"They

"They are fruſtrated, Roncorone," ſhe replied, "moſt happily fruſtrated by your appearance; therefore enquire not concerning them. What I have ſuffered, forget; what I may hereafter ſuffer through enmity, reſent as love and honour ſhall prompt you. Signor," ſhe continued, turning to Salvini, "before I go, I will openly explain to you my intentions: my heart is, as I have often told you, attached to Signor Roncorone; nor do I bluſh to add, that I wiſh to be united to him. Your reaſons for impeding ſuch an union are of a feathery ſubſtance;—and even if you had in your poſſeſſion the paper which, on a former occaſion, you mentioned to have been depoſited by the hands of my dying parent, yet the written requeſt of a father (incompetent at that time to judge of my future circumſtances), who has been ſo many years in the earth, ſhall not deſtroy

or vary thoſe principles on which I now ground virtue and happineſs."

"Are you the daughter of Venzone?" ſaid Salvini.

"Are you the friend of Venzone's daughter?" cried Roſolie, with indignation; "Signor, recollect! Did you not throw aſide that character laſt night? Did you not—good Heaven! did you not, reſembling a fiend rather than a man, laſt night——"

"What of laſt night?" I exclaimed, interrupting her; "what of laſt night, Roſolie?"

"Nothing, Roncorone," ſhe replied;—"come, I will go with you. Signor, I am parting from you for ever."

"Salvini," I cried, "if ever we meet again, I ſhall wiſh to ſee more honourable characters in your face, and to diſcover more

generous ſentiments in your mind, more virtue in your heart."

"Beware!" he ſaid, "beware of what that mind, and of what that heart may ſuggeſt! Beware of what theſe hands may execute!"

"Boaſt and vanity!" I exclaimed;—"vaunts of imbecility! Roſolie, my arm; let us be gone this inſtant; let us fly from this reſidence of malice and vice."

Salvini was ruſhing upon her, in order to prevent her going; but I put him aſide with my arm, and led her out of the room. He had brought with him from Venice only two ſervants; ſuch force, therefore, as there was to oppoſe me, I could have reſiſted. The raſcal who had been the deceiver and robber of Roſolie, did not now appear, concealing himſelf, perhaps, through dread of receiving the puniſhment he ſo well deſerved. The

other domeſtic made a faint reſiſtance when we were paſſing the door; but taking hold of his ſhoulders, I drove him to the oppoſite wall, and then walked on with my ſweet Roſolie, regardleſs of the curſes which Salvini ſent after us. I now beheld her as mine!—My joy was almoſt too great; and when we loſt ſight of the houſe, I ſtopped, and preſſed her with rapture to my heart. She ſmiled, wept, and talked of our future happineſs.

"But what of laſt night?" I ſaid; "what of laſt night, my love?"

"Salvini was inſolent."

"What, rude? Was he rude?"

"Yes, Roncorone, he came upon me by ſurpriſe."

"Villain!—I'll murder him!"

My blood ſeemed to run like lava, and I wanted to return, in order that I might cruſh his carcaſe into duſt; but Roſolie held me by

by the arm, ſmiled away my rage, and made me promiſe not to think of revenge.—Would I had not liſtened to her! would I had met him again, and cut out the heart of the rank villain from his accurſed body! * * *

* * * * * *

I remembered the path I had taken from the inn, and it was not long before I returned to it with the dear prize for which I had been a fortunate adventurer. The diſtance was not long, and therefore occaſioned her ſcarcely any fatigue; but, as I had conjectured, there was no horſe to be procured to take her on her way to Trent, though I was informed that I might probably be accommodated at a houſe which was named to be within two miles. Roſolie, feeling herſelf ſecure under my protection, ſmiled at this little perplexity, and aſſured me that ſhe ſhould be able to walk to the place which our hoſt had mentioned,

tioned, and even from thence to Trent, provided the means of conveyance could not be then met with.

"Surely, on ſuch an occaſion as this," ſhe ſaid, gaily, "I may exert myſelf a little, particularly if I think that, had you not arrived till to-morrow, I ſhould have perhaps been driven from you for ever."

"Why that ſuſpicion, my lovely Roſolie?"

"Becauſe it was the intention of the Signor to depart from hence to-morrow, and to take me and Bianca with him to France. This deſign he communicated to me, though I had previouſly and ſecretly been made acquainted with it by the converſation which had been held between him and his deſpicable ſervant in the garden, and which, as I have before told you, I heard from a window of one of the chambers. A few hours more, Roncorone, and I ſhould have been driven

from

from you into a foreign country, where I ſhould have been the victim of inſolence, and perhaps of rudeneſs."

"Curſed beyond redemption," I exclaimed, "might he have been who dared to offer it!"

"Salvini, I fear," ſhe ſaid, "would have been that villain; after what I have lately ſeen of him, I ſhould have had every thing that is ſhocking and brutal continually to dread. This is the man who, over the death-bed of my father, vowed to protect his helpleſs child! But let us talk no more of him; he is unworthy, Roncorone, therefore let us forget him. You are my confidence, my hope of felicity! While I am in the poſſeſſion of your love, ſo long ſhall I be happy."

"Be happy then, ſweet Roſolie!" I cried, folding her in my arms; "be happy till the hour in which death ſhall ſeparate us;

till

till the laſt moment of mortality; till one of us join the ſhadows of the departed, leaving the other with painful reluctance and regret."

She melted into tears, and ſunk upon my breaſt; my ſenſibili·y was likewiſe affected; it prevented me from ſpeaking further, and for a few moments we both remained ſilent. The landlord coming in, I deſired him to lead my horſe to the door, which being afterwards done, I placed Roſolie upon it, and led it by the bridle to the other inn, to which we had been directed, where we fortunately procured a carriage, and an additional horſe to take us to Trent, at which place we arrived in the evening.

The ſpirits of my Roſolie now reviving, ſhe appeared to me more lovely and intereſting than ever; the hours which we ſpent till we retired to our beds, were hours of delight and of happineſs; our paſt dangers and difficulties

difficulties were either forgotten, or ſlightly mentioned; her love was aided by her confidence in me, and mine, ſincere and tender, reſted on the foundation of honour. We talked unreſervedly of our approaching union: we formed ſuch plans of joy—but Oh! few of them were realized!

On the following morning we left the town, and proceeded in a more comfortable manner towards Venice, which place we arrived at in due courſe of time, and in perfect ſafety. My firſt care was to place my Roſolie in the little houſe that I had prepared for her previouſly to the commencement of our perplexities, the poſſeſſion of which the ſervants whom I had hired ſtill retained;—I then went to ſeek for Alberti; nor was I long in finding him. Ruſhing into his arms, I rapidly told him of my ſucceſſes, and

and his congratulations were neither few nor tardy.

"Did I not tell you," he cried, "that Proſperity would attend you if you did but ſmile on her? From this time, Roncorone, knit not your brows on the trifling embarraſſments of life, or on the contrarieties of worldly circumſtances. But indeed I am moſt happy that you have recovered the poſſeſſion of the ſweet Venzone."

"It is you," I cried, "it is you, Alberti, to whom I owe her! Had it not been for your friendly ſolicitude and aſſiduity, ſhe would probably have been kept apart from me for a long time—perhaps for ever!"

"Let me be repaid by my own pleaſure, rather than by your thanks," replied Alberti. "But what of Salvini? What have you to ſay of him?"

"That

"That he is a villain is too little to report, too favourable; that the earth bears not one more atrocious, comes nearer to the truth. I will, however, ſpeak of him as we go along; for my love will be impatient at my delay, and on this happy day I cannot diſpenſe with your ſociety."

"I took him by his arm, and we went out together, and returned to Roſolie with all poſſible expedition. I had already apprized her of the very friendly ſervices of Alberti, and particularly mentioned the readineſs and promptitude with which he had undertaken the journey to diſcover Salvini's retreat.—Gratitude always makes the aſpect ſweet; but it rendered Roſolie's lovely and faſcinating;—and when ſhe received the ſalutation of my friend, her animated features, her ſmiles, and her ſoft accents cauſed me to adore her,

if

if it were poſſible, more than ever, and apparently made a captive of Alberti.

Having been for ſo long a time previous to this the ſport and deriſion of miſchance, I could ſcarcely regulate my actions, or limit my joy. Roſolie was, in ſome degree, actuated by ſimilar affections; and the ſpirits of Alberti, ſeldom depreſſed, were now in perfect harmony: the day therefore was exquiſitely paſſed by our little ſociety, and it was at a late hour when I and Alberti departed from the houſe.

"Is ſhe not amiable?" I enquired, almoſt as ſoon as the door was cloſed; "is ſhe not a lovely being?"

"She is delectable!" he replied; "a poet, in deſcribing her, might poſſibly be extravagant; but he would be obliged, in juſtice, to enrich his image with the choiceſt ornaments. Joy to you, my Roncorone; joy to you, I repeat,

repeat, on the acquiſition of ſo exquiſite a partner!"

The cold prudential mortal deals out his maxims with preciſion, and ſends forth his frigid ſentiments, ſtruck, like inferior coin, from the mint of his droſſy brain; but I was diſcourſing with an almoſt brother on the tendereſt of all ſubjects; therefore, whatever roſe within my mind, my tongue ſcrupled not to expreſs, nor did caution privately hint to me that I was garrulous. After I had parted from Alberti, I was little inclined to ſleep; for joy had baniſhed the uſual torpor of the mind. Though I ſought for Roſolie early the next day, ſhe was riſen before I arrived, and ran forward to meet me as I entered at the door; her looks expreſſed happineſs and tranquillity, and ſhe gave me the morning ſalutation with vivacity.

She

and from him we had a lively account of almoſt every occurrence in Venice;—but ſo whimſical was the narrator, that he frequently jumbled together the affairs of the Senate and of the Opera, and paſſed, in an inſtant, from the moſt ſerious concerns of the Republic to the deſcription of a new ballet. His muſical talent was a recommendation to the favour of Roſolie; and his ſpirits, being uninterruptedly good, he would either play or ſing whenever requeſted.

To our great ſurpriſe, Alberti informed us that Salvini was returned to, and publicly appearing in Venice; that he was undaunted at the ſarcaſtic remarks which were made on his conduct, and hypocritically and moſt ſtrenuouſly endeavouring to alter the opinion which had been ſo generally formed of his recent proceedings. In order to accompliſh this purpoſe, he was ſpreading ſtories, wherever

he

he went, highly prejudicial to me and Roſolie; but Alberti led me to ſuppoſe that they were ſuſpectingly received, and that the preſent artifices of my enemy were too ill-contrived and feeble to bring back his reputation to its former ſtandard.

Provoked at theſe freſh proofs of his inſolence and malice, I felt much inclined to go immediately in ſearch of him, that I might give him the chaſtiſement he had ſo long merited; but ſeeing Roſolie terrified when I hinted at ſuch an intention, I did not execute it, though I was enraged to think that the ſlanderous coward ſhould be left to propagate his infamous lies with impunity.

I however wrote a letter to him, peremptorily deſiring him to adhere to truth in whatever he ſaid reſpecting either me or my wife, and to create no ſtory whereby the world might be able to cenſure us; if he

acted conſiſtently, as I wiſhed, I informed him that I ſhould wholly diſregard his future concerns; but if he ſtill perſiſted in his idleneſs and depravity, I vowed that I would render him a public ſpectacle of pain and diſgrace.

He did not reply to this letter, nor did I afterwards meet with him when I went occaſionally to the city. Alberti informed me that he appeared but little in public, that the auſterity of his features was increaſed, and that the name of his late ward was not ſo often repeated by him. I conjectured this change to be owing to cowardice, rather than to good principles; and, whatever might have cauſed it, I could but feel ſatisfied, as it made my dear Roſolie more happy and tranquil.

* * * * * *

But

But I am prevented for a while from continuing my narrative; my materials are nearly all waſted, and to obtain a ſupply is ſomewhat difficult. Moſt of theſe mountaineers are poor and ignorant, which accounts for their honeſty;—their ſuperior fellows, if the expreſſion be not abſurd, might indeed accommodate me; but I deteſt to aſk a favour of thoſe who are erect and conſequential, and who, in their own inverted eyes, appear of ſuch infinite importance, though to the ſight of other men, whom they wiſh to confound, they ſeem little more than pigmies aiming at the ſtride and gait of a giant. Oh world, world! of what ſtrange matter art thou compoſed! To examine thy corrupted particles, moſt vile and ſhocking in the maſs, may ſometimes provoke a ſmile, but will more often excite a tear. Oh, I am ſick and weary of thee!

There is a little peaſant boy who, deriding the fears of his aſſociates, for it ſeems I am an innocent cauſe of terror, often offers himſelf to ſerve me. I think the ſtripling loves me tenderly; for he is as willing to do me a kindneſs as if I were a Monarch, and he my page; he ſmiles in my face when he hears me ſpeak; and in doing what I wiſh him to perform, he is as active as a kid. He loves not money, though I force him to take it; and tells me that ſuch rewards leſſen the pleaſure which he feels in obliging me. Early independence of an uncommon ſoul!

Boy, I judge that thou wilt not be fated to waſte thy days in tending a herd upon theſe mountains; if thou ſhouldſt, may neither blaſt affect the herbage, nor murrain thy cattle! if thy active ſpirit lead thee to range the world, may the rays of a protecting Providence fall upon every choſen path!

My

My young friend promiſed me yeſterday to procure me the materials neceſſary for continuing my narrative; he could not obtain them in the village, but aſſured me that it ſhould not be long before I received them.

* * * * * *

My meſſenger is returned with the paper. He has been three leagues for it; but, in order to prevent any concern on my part, he tells me that he had another errand.

"I wanted to buy a book," he ſays;—"but it was not to be had at the place I have been to. My mother loves to hear me read, loves to ſee me happy; ſhe therefore gave me the money which was neceſſary, and which I will work the harder for, and alſo allowed me to go to the town where I thought of making my purchaſe. But for the time I have loſt, I can eaſily make amends, by

wonder at my words, nor think them extravagant.

Connubial love, how ſweet did I find thee! I and my Roſolie were happy, harmonious, in peace with mankind, and grateful to Heaven. Our retirement was enchanting; and to improve the natural beauties around us, to arrange the bluſhing flowers in our garden, to cull the ſweets of poeſy, and to wander in an evening upon the borders of the tranquil ſea, gave us more pleaſure than we could have found in the active city.

The expectations which I had formed before I poſſeſſed her, were fully realized; and great and many as my wiſhes had been, they were completely anſwered. Of Venice we ſaw little; we however heard much of it from Alberti, whoſe friendſhip increaſed, rather than diminiſhed: Salvini was become wholly

wholly a ſtranger to us, and we held little converſe with any of his acquaintances.

We were one evening preparing to go on the water, when we were ſurpriſed to ſee a carriage driven up to the door, and the coachman alight, in order to let ſome perſon out of it. Roſolie and I went to the window, and in a moment perceived poor Signora Bianca, pale, and apparently weakened by affliction, ſlowly walking towards the houſe: we both ran forward to meet her, and my tender Roſolie threw her arms around the neck of her enfeebled friend, who, choaked with grief, could not ſpeak to either of us; ſhe, however, took hold of my arm, and when ſhe got into the parlour, ſunk on a ſofa, and burſt into tears.

My wife was greatly affected, and their ſorrows touched my heart. Bianca was evidently in agony, for her breath ſeemed nearly

ſuppreſſed; and though ſhe endeavoured repeatedly to ſpeak, ſhe could not articulate a ſingle word. Roſolie ſtill conjured her to be compoſed, and I joined my entreaties to her's; but the grief of our unhappy viſiter was abſolute, and it was ſeveral minutes before ſhe could put any degree of reſtraint upon it. Her appearance alone was ſufficient to excite compaſſion; for her eyes ſeemed as if they were loſing themſelves in their ſockets; and her cheeks, colourleſs and thin, reſembled thoſe of a corpſe rather than of an animated being.

"I beg you, dear Signora," ſaid Roſolie, "I beg you to be comforted. To ſee you thus affects me greatly: tell me what I can do for you."

"Nothing, Roſolie," ſhe replied; "nothing at preſent, dear girl! My worldly wants are almoſt over: look in my face,

child; look at my emaciated figure! I am come hither only to die in peace!"

"To die!" exclaimed Roſolie; "to die! God forbid!"

"If you love me, Roſolie," ſhe anſwered, "you will ſay, God grant it! You will implore him, as I do, to remove my afflictions, and to quiet for ever the agonizing pulſations of my broken heart; broken by the cruelty of an unnatural brother. Oh Heaven! can I have done any thing to merit this ſeverity? But my complaints are uſeleſs: I ſhall die, dear Roſolie, in your arms; I ſhall die, and be happy!"

The friends clung ſtill cloſer to each other, and a pauſe enſued, which my concern and agitation would not allow me to interrupt.—It was nearly an hour before Bianca could diſtinctly ſpeak to us again; and then ſhe appeared ſo enfeebled and exhauſted, that we

thought it would be more prudent to perſuade her to repoſe herſelf in bed, than to enter into any diſtreſſing converſation; and ſhe was therefore conducted to a chamber by my greatly affected and ſympathizing Roſolie.

I knew the gentleneſs of poor Bianca's diſpoſition, had ſeen many traits of the goodneſs of her heart, and repeatedly heard her commended, in tender and ardent terms, by my wife. I was as well acquainted with the oppoſite qualities of her brother, with his villanies, and want of principle and humanity; it ſurpriſed me not, therefore, that he could be proud, cruel, and revengeful to her, though ſhe belonged to the ſame parents, and had received her infant nutriment at the ſame breaſt as himſelf; and, harbouring ſcarcely a ſingle doubt but that he were capable of ſpurning at any thing divine, it

ſeemed

ſeemed to me not improbable that he could break through every thing moral and human.

In the morning the poor refugee was in no degree revived; ſhe was equally, if not more ill than ſhe had been on the preceding night, though her mind was ſomewhat tranquillized. She did not leave her chamber, but Roſolie attended her in it, and I was admitted to ſpeak to her. She joined our hands, and laying her cold lips on them, prayed that our union might be proſperous and happy.

Oh Bianca! if thy ſpirit has ſince been permitted to obſerve our deſtiny, ſurely it has often withdrawn itſelf to Heaven in ſadneſs and in tears!

When ſhe had raiſed herſelf on the couch, ſhe ſpoke to us again.

"Let

"Let not the ſtate in which you, dear friends, now ſee me, give pain to either of you. To ſuppreſs all manner of concern for me I know you are too good, too gentle to be capable of; but moderate your grief, Roſolie: all the world, except you and your huſband, regard me as an object too worthleſs to excite any compaſſion. Even my brother—God! even my brother thinks me ſo!—Oh, I have often heard of a broken heart; experience now tells me what it is!"

"It may be amended, dear Signora!" he cried; "it may be amended!"

"Never!" ſhe replied, ſolemnly, "never! and, by the Victim of thorns, I do not wiſh it; for I have faith to die upon, and fortitude to bear the breaking of mortality. There have been incautious moments when I have called my brother my murderer: raſh I confeſs it was; but I do believe that he has abridged

abridged my life. I was thrown upon his care at an early age; when he was a boy, I had to fear his cruel authority; afterwards, when he had attained the ſtate of manhood, he prevented my union with a brave, a worthy, a lamented man! Years of unkindneſs followed, and now he loads me with reproaches, with names which ſhock me, and drives me from his houſe, as he would an importunate beggar, only for——"

"Only for what?" I enquired, on finding her pauſe.

"Only for telling him, in terms not ungentle, that he has acted unworthily; that I thought you a man of honour and of good principles, and that I could never ceaſe to love my dear Roſolie, whom he had ſo much injured and inſulted!"

"And he threw you off for that?"

"He

"He did, he did; drove me violently from him; pointed to the door; told me never to approach him again!"

"Oh! you have made me miſerable," exclaimed my wife, ſinking down by her ſide. "Have you, dear Bianca, have you ſuffered abuſe and violence for ſpeaking kindly of me, and doing juſtice to my Roncorone? My heart is full of pain—it bleeds for you, Bianca!"

"Be not concerned on my account," replied the fugitive; "I ſhall die under your roof, for I came hither on purpoſe; all thereafter will be happy! God, whom I have never wilfully offended, will amply reward me for my earthly ſufferings."

Her injuries pained, but her exemplary reſignation charmed me.

"Iniquitous Salvini," I cried, "your ſoul is burdened with a thouſand ſins. Caſt this brother,

brother, dear Signora, for ever from your heart, if it be poſſible he ſtill retain a place in it; renounce him, and under this roof of your ſincere friends, endeavour, by cheerfulneſs, to re-eſtabliſh your health and happineſs. Roſolie has ſufficient cauſe to love, and I to eſteem you; make this your aſylum, then, and rely on Providence for your recovery."

"Do, dear Bianca," ſaid my wife; "do, my ſecond mother!"

The ſcene that enſued was in the higheſt degree affecting; the ſenſibility of our new inmate overpowered her; her frame had been too much enfeebled to withſtand it, and ſhe again fell beneath the force of her ſorrows. Her affliction increaſed every day; I called medical men to her; they however gave me no aſſurances of the efficacy of their ſkill in the preſent caſe, but led me to ſuppoſe

poſe that the malady of the patient had go beyond remedy.

This daughter of ſorrow and of reſign tion died within a month after her firſt re dence with us; and her end was nearly ſerene as her life had been. Death nev ſtruck his enſign upon an eaſier conqueſt.

* * * * * *

Excellent Bianca! what a farewel to t world was thine! God ſurely was, in thc moments, before thine eyes, ſmiling thee in fortitude and tranquillity. The wicked c never expect ſo eaſy a diſſolution; and f even of the pious and reſigned are known have it. It was but as a falling into ſlumb a gentle lying down with the hope of aga riſing. And thou ſhalt riſe! the reward ſpirits of virtue ſhall guide thee towar Heaven, and welcome thee in it with ſtrai of holy harmony. The lily that ſprin

fro

from the ſtem which was ſeared by the ſun of autumn, and cruſhed by the ſtorms of winter, ſhall not be ſweeter or purer in its bloſſoms than thou ſhalt be in thy re-animation. Salvini, murderous Salvini! thou wilt never re-animate; or, if thou doſt, it will be only to raiſe thy ſick head among the peſtilential blaſts iſſuing from the fiends of eternal and unquenchable heat!

The little property that Bianca died poſſeſſed of, ſhe bequeathed to Roſolie; it conſiſted of a ſmall ſum of money, a diamond croſs, ſome trinkets and clothes; her bleſſing was added to the bequeſt, and ſhe begged Roſolie to keep her in her memory.—Bianca had been loved and reſpected by all of us; and even the gay Alberti aſſumed a look of penſiveneſs when ſpeaking of her diſſolution. Salvini, that deteſtable, baſe, and unnatural being, was made acquainted with

with the tenor of her will by Alberti, and the property that had been left to Roſolie, which, at the time of Bianca's death, was at his houſe in Venice, was immediately conveyed to us by his agent. The departed, a little while before the powers of ſpeech failed, never more to be revived, had deſired to be interred at Altino, where the aſhes of the man, whom ſhe had once tenderly alluded to were reſting: and indeed her brother, though apprized early of her deceaſe by Alberti, expreſſed no wiſh to have the body conveyed to the vault of his family. Roſolie, therefore, erected a ſimple monument to the memory of the deceaſed, and I furniſhed her with an epitaph for it, ſuch an one as was ſuited to the virtues and humility of the departed mortal.

Roſolie was a ſincere and unaffected mourner; the clouds of ſorrow at length, however,

however, paſſed over her brows, and the ſmiles of ſerenity and love were ſeen again.—We were not merely huſband and wife; we had aſſociation of minds, as well as of bodies; the qualities of our ſouls were examined, and found to be the ſame; our ideas correſponded; in the impaſſioned moments I ſought her as my joy; in affliction ſhe was a ſoother; and had I known diſtreſs, I ſhould not have known it alone—I ſhould have had a participating conſoler.

God! I worſhipped thee more, infinitely more, for giving me ſuch a treaſure!

If I had been abſent from her a few hours, my return was joyful; if a day, rapturous!—Roſolie would run to meet me, her eyes alone ſpeaking affection; ſhe would ruſh into my arms, hang upon my neck, neſtle in my boſom, lay her panting heart cloſe to mine—

mine—cloſer, ſtill cloſer—kiſs me, and again kiſs me—Oh!——

* * * * * * *

But I am now coming to an important event—Important?—Horrid! horrid!—Reaſon, do not forſake me: ſuffer not the fiend Inſanity again to twiſt her accurſed fingers in the fibres of my body, nor to light her conſuming fires in my head; if ſhe muſt be buſy once more with me, let her not procraſtinate—let her rather entirely root out my brains, and ſtrew them on the earth; let her rather pluck out my heart, and hurl it to the fierceſt brutes of theſe mountains.—Soft, ſoft, Roncorone, or ſome churl will ſcourge thee for bombaſt!

END OF VOL. I.

THE MYSTERY OF THE BLACK TOWER,

By John Palmer,

TWO VOLUMES, 12MO. PRICE 6s. SEWED.

It appears eſſential to romance, that the ſcene it deſcribes ſhould either be remote from the times in which we live, or the people with whom we converſe. The firſt of theſe rules has been obeyed by Mr. Palmer, and he has thrown his ſcenery back into the reign of Edward the Third—an æra of chivalry and warlike enterpriſe perfectly favourable to his deſign. His conception of the ſubject is, in other reſpects, ſufficiently juſt; and by the introduction of a facetious Welch Squire, he has enlivened the ſolemnity of his graver ſcenes with occaſional flaſhes of humour.

The romance is certainly executed with ability, and diſcovers ſuch talents for that ſpecies of compoſition, as may be ſaid to merit the protection of the public.

Britiſh Critic, October 1797.

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The name of Mr. Moſer has the very reſpectable praiſe of being prefixed to productions which have the aim of giving "ardour to truth, and confidence to virtue." The oriental tales which compoſe theſe volumes are free from any diſguſting extravagance of fiction; the Author having avowedly employed ſupernatural agency agreeably to the prudent reſtriction of Horace—

"Nec Deus interſit, niſi dignus vindice nodus."

We recommend theſe tales as containing a ſeries of uſeful leſſons, which tend to inculcate a firm reliance on the wiſdom and benevolence of a ſuperintending Providence.

Critical Review, February 1799.

BOOKS PRINTED AT THE MINERVA PRESS.

THE MOUNTAIN COTTAGER,

OR,

WONDER UPON WONDER.

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A pleaſant and ingenious Tale, lively, fanciful, and well written. Miſs Ann Plumptre is, we underſtand, the tranſlator of this intereſting little Novel.

Analytical Review, November 1798.

A ſprightly little boy, though from the German, heretofore proverbial for dullneſs. It is faithfully tranſlated.

Ladies' Annual Regiſter, 1798.

We can ſafely recommend this well-written Tale to our young readers, without running the hazard of endangering their morals. We underſtand that its tranſlator is Miſs Plumptre, who has executed her taſk with ability.

Monthly Viſiter, February 1799.

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The injurious tendency of a blind parental fondneſs, and the fatal conſequences of diſſipation, are well diſplayed in this Novel. The ſtory is intereſting, the language in which it is conveyed, preſerves a reſpectable mediocrity, and the characters faithfully repreſent many originals, which are to be found in the circles of real life.

Critical Review, February 1799.

MAD MAN

OF

THE MOUNTAIN.

MAD MAN

OF

THE MOUNTAIN.

A TALE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY HENRY SUMMERSETT,

AUTHOR OF PROBABLE INCIDENTS, &c.

" Whither are fled the charms of vernal grace,
" And joy's wild gleams that lighten'd o'er thy face?
" Youth of tumultuous ſoul, and haggard eye!
" Thy waſted form, thy hurried ſteps I view!
" On thy cold forehead ſtarts the anguiſh'd dew,
" And dreadful was that boſom-rending ſigh!"

COLERIDGE'S MONODY.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
PRINTED AT THE
Minerva-Preſs,
FOR WILLIAM LANE, LEADENHALL-STREET.
1799.

THE

Mad Man of the Mountain.

CHAP. I.

MY good and generous friend Alberti had been dangerouſly wounded by ſome villains in the ſtreets of Venice, to whom he reſolutely refuſed to give up his money; and his hurts were of ſuch a nature, that it was conjectured death would be the conſequence of them. Apprized of his injury, I haſtened to him, in order that I might perform the offices of friendſhip; and, indeed, I found that his piteous ſituation

entitled him to the ſofteſt of them, for he had ſeveral contuſions on his head and after he had been reſcued, part of a broken ſtiletto was found in his back; his loſs of blood had been great, and a fever ſucceeding, his intellects were deranged, and he knew no one who came near to him.

My pain on ſeeing him in this ſtate, was exceſſive; and when I returned home, and ſpoke of him to Roſolie, ſhe neither could, nor attempted to reſtrain her tears: we both feared the loſs of a moſt excellent friend and good man, and both execrated the unknown monſters who had ſo cruelly and privately aſſaulted him. I attended ſeveral days on the unconſcious Alberti, returning to Roſolie every evening; but as he grew conſiderably worſe, and it was ſuggeſted by the phyſicians that nature was rapidly

rapidly failing, I reſolved to paſs a night with him, thinking that, ere the morning, he would be totally overpowered by death.

Roſolie was ſomewhat indiſpoſed, but ſhe wiſhed me to be with Alberti, and afterwards, ſeeing me reluctant on account of her illneſs, entreated me to go. I kiſſed her, and calling Lucilla, her maid, cautioned her to take care of her miſtreſs till my return. I then went back again to Venice, and placed myſelf near the bed of Alberti; nor did I quit my ſtation till the morning, when, to my infinite ſurpriſe and joy, the doctors informed me that the fever had very conſiderably abated, and that there was a probability of the recovery of their patient.

"Then I am happy!" I exclaimed; "I will return to my Roſolie, and inform her of this favourable change. I am ſure it will make her joyful; the preſervation of

ſo excellent a friend will call forth h[illegible]er gratitude to Heaven."

I felt the pulſations of my heart, whi[illegible]h had long been languid, almoſt inſtant[illegible]ly increaſe in their force and activity, a[illegible]nd ardently preſſed the hands of thoſe w[illegible]ho nurtured the hopes which had before be[illegible]en famiſhing. It was with the greateſt ſpee[illegible]d, and with moſt ſincere pleaſure, that I pu[illegible]r-ſued my way towards my habitation. T[illegible]he morning was clear and lovely, like my im[illegible]a-gination, which now burſt through t[illegible]he vapours that had been collecting around i[illegible]t; the air was enriched by the contributions of flowers and herbs, and I looked into two or three of Roſolie's favourite haunts, in t[illegible]he fond expectation of finding her.

A ſmall group of trees only was now be-tween me and my love, and I peeped throug[illegible] their branches in order to gain a ſight of her

:r dwelling. A man, who was known to ıe, met me on the road;—I had ever judged y his face that he was one of the happieſt ıf mortals; but now the grief that hung ɔn his countenance, and the horrid manner in which he looked at me, made me on the inſtant withdraw my opinion. He croſſed me in my path, and graſped my arm. "Have you not ſeen," he cried, "have you not ſeen——"

"What?" I enquired with aſtoniſhment.

"Have you not heard of your——"

"Of what?"

"Of your houſe, Signor?"

"No!"

"Of your wife?"

"Mercy! no, no, no!"

"Not that ſhe is——"

"Dead! ſpeak, ſpeak! dead!"

"Go not forward, Signor," he cried, graſping me at the ſame time with increaſed ſtrength, "go not forward!"

"Let me go on!" I exclaimed, almoſt frenzied; "take your hands from me inſtantly!"

"Signor, liſten to me; proceed no further; the ſight will kill you!"

"Sight! God! what ſight? Offer to detain me another minute, and the balls that are in this piſtol ſhall be lodged in your head!"

I produced the inſtrument, and levelling it at him, he croſſed the road, when, turning the angle of the grove, I ſtrained my eyes in looking for my habitation, but ſaw only ſome blackened ruins: for a moment I ſhut out the ſight. Rouſing myſelf, however, from the lethargy into which I was falling, I ran among the people who were gathered together

together. "Who periſhed in the flames?" I cried franticly.

"All who reſided in the houſe," was the anſwer; "none eſcaped."

"None eſcaped?" I ſaid, "none eſcaped?"

"None, Signor, none."

"None eſcaped!"

I fell on the earth, and becoming inſenſible, was for a conſiderable time unconſcious of my miſeries and misfortunes."

My ſenſes afterwards returned; I broke from thoſe who ſtrove to detain me, and ran wildly round the ruined fabric, calling on my wife, my Roſolie! But I was not anſwered; ſhe had periſhed—had been devoured by the flames! and not a limb or bone of either her or of the two ſervants could be diſcovered among the aſhes! My brain ſeemed to be incruſted; I had not power to move my eyes, and my veins felt

as if they were icicles. When the ſpectators firſt oppoſed me, my ſtrength was lion-like; but my nerves ſoon relaxed, and a child might have brought me to the ground. This feebleneſs alſo extended to my mind: I was now to be guided, and was unreſiſtingly led away.

* * * * * *

I am convinced that inſanity has its bleſſings; for, during the whole of the month that ſucceeded the conflagration, I was never more happy; but of the nature of my ideas, of their ſtrength, or of their weakneſs, I cannot now ſpeak. Reaſon afterwards gradually approached; I wiſhed not, however, for its return; and in order to deſtroy the growing ſtability of my mind, I exerted myſelf as much as poſſible, and whirled myſelf round repeatedly, thinking

by

by ſuch means to make my brain eternally giddy.

I was in one of theſe half-frenzied moods when my hoſpitable hoſt (the man who had compaſſionately borne me from my ruined abode, and ſince ſheltered and protected me) entered the room in which I was;—not regarding him, I continued my extravagant practice till I almoſt petrified him with fear, and till I fell on the floor, which I ſtained with my blood; my temples being torn by a nail that projected from a wall, againſt which I ſtaggered, and the ſtream that flowed in conſequence of it was copious.

"Mother of Chriſt!" exclaimed Paulo; "do you yet live, Signor?"

I heard his voice, knew perfectly well what he ſaid, and ſtarting on my feet, ran towards him, in order to aſſure him that I was not only in being, but alſo ſenſible of

the objects around me; he, however, hurried away from me, pointing at the ſame time to the door, near to which ſtood a man almoſt as lean and pale as death.

"Roncorone!" ſaid the phantom-like figure, "poor, poor Roncorone!"

Theſe were the accents of Alberti, and I knew them to be ſuch. I extended my arms, and ran upon him. In my paroxyſms I hugged him with an almoſt ſuffocating ſtrain; and the blood that trickled from my wound ſtained his aſhy cheeks, while my tears fell into his boſom, and his eyes were as prodigal as mine.

"To meet thus," ſaid Alberti——"

"Is happineſs!" I cried. "Come to my heart, friend; it is cold, but your friendſhip will warm it. Here is my hand; take it as the pledge of a brother's love. We parted in joy——"

"Oh, no, Roncorone!"

"Yes, yes, Alberti, we parted in joy, and in joy we again meet: by theſe throbbings and internal emotions we do!—and yet, I think our countenances and bodies ought to be, in ſome degree, actuated by our ſouls. Why, your cheeks are dreadfully ſallow, and your eyes glare on me ſo ſtrangely, that they look like fragments of the mirror of death!"

"Friend, I have ſuffered!"

"Aye, and *I* have ſuffered. Sit—I'll tell you how."

"Forbear, forbear, Roncorone!"

"Sit, liſten. Do you not remember that I had a wife? You cannot have forgotten what a kind angel God formed in Heaven for me; ſhe loved you as my friend. You muſt recollect how beautiful ſhe uſed to ſmile upon us when we

approached her, and what muſic came from her tongue when ſhe addreſſed herſelf to us. Well, Signor—nay, nay, ſit patiently. It is ſaid that no event happens on earth but what is under the immediate direction of Heaven; my wife, Alberti, while you were ſuffering in your misfortune, was burnt—her lily fleſh incruſted to a cinder, or converted into aſhes! Not a veſtige of thoſe arms, which have ſo often enfolded me, was to be found; and thoſe breaſts on which I nightly pillowed my head—on which—God! God! why am I left to be the narrator of this tale? Alberti, do you now wonder at theſe tears? Do you wonder that my wretched boſom ſwells with ſighs, or that I wiſh to lay down my miſerable life, and to ſtep beyond what is now before me?"

"Be calm, my dear friend!" ſaid Alberti, preſſing me again to his breaſt.

"Oh,

"Oh, my wife! my wife!"

"She is happy, Roncorone."

"And I ſhall ſoon be happy with her!" I exclaimed. "Alberti, whenever you paſs by my grave, whether at morning, noon, or night, let the tears of friendſhip and of compaſſion fall upon the ſod that covers me."

"May you yet continue many years," ſaid Alberti, "before ſuch a proof of ſympathy be required of me!"

"Oh! we are all ſorry pilgrims, Alberti, and I of all the moſt ſorry. The proſpect of life appears to me as a damp and mouldy picture; the once pleaſing objects of which no longer retain their colour, grace, or proportion. My eyes are diſguſted; many times do I cloſe them, and with never to open them more; and when, after ſucceſſive days of wearineſs and deſpair, I lay down

my

my throbbing head, 'Father Eternal! I exclaim, let me now ſleep till the world tumbles into chaos, and till the beams of thy glory animate the ſpirit which thou haſt ſaid ſhall live unfading ages!'

"Roncorone," cried Alberti, "do not thus agitate yourſelf; your paſſions will tear you in pieces. You bleed too; you muſt be faint; let me apply ſomething to your wound."

I aſſured him it was only a ſcratch, not telling him, however, what had occaſioned it; and Paulo bringing in ſome water, I removed the ſtain from my face. I then again drew near to my friend, and, for a moment forgetting part of my own ſorrows, enquired how he had ſtruggled through his recent afflictions. His heart was too noble for querulous complaint; yet the manner in which he replied to me was very affecting.

I learned

I learned that, after I had left him at Venice, he had, though appearances were previouſly in ſome degree favourable, relapſed into pain and diſtraction, and that few days had elapſed ſince his phyſician allowed him to go abroad. His firſt enquiries had been reſpecting me, and at Venice he became acquainted with my miſeries.

He now exerted all his powers in perſuading me to return to the city, but I would not conſent to accompany him; I was bound to the place in which I then lived, and could not fly from it.

I wiſhed to die there—to begin my pilgrimage from thence to the regions in which the ſpirit of Roſolie was then awaiting me, to penetrate and become familiar to thoſe things which God has wrapped in myſtery. My ſoul anxiouſly ſtrove to burſt its bonds; ſometimes I thought it actually

was

was forcing its prison-gates, and the temporary trances into which my giddy brain was lulled, were, at their commencement, considered as the effects of the approaching oblivion of mortality; but I was both deceived and disappointed by them.

Alberti staid several days with me; he was, however, compelled to go back to Venice; and as I declined going with him, we separated, and all my sorrows, my griefs, and my distractions returned with unabated force. The story of a gossip had now as much effect on me as the precepts of philosophy—even as those which my departed uncle had often dressed in the beauties of language, and which would sometimes for a moment cross my mind.

At the end of a month Alberti was again with me—kind, generous, good Alberti! His heart was tortured for me; and while

he

he threw his arms around me, he entreated me to put aſide my deſpondency, and to truſt myſelf to the guidance of his friendſhip. I loved him the more for his ſolicitude, but ſtill refuſed to comply with his propoſal, when he appeared more diſtreſſed and mortified, and for ſeveral ſucceeding days he remained ſilent on the ſubject. Had my mother given birth to him and to myſelf at the ſame hour, I could not have loved him more; and what man ſhould be to man, ſo was I to him, and he to me.

One evening he had talked me into a ſeeming tranquillity, and Paulo had furniſhed him with a bottle of choice wine: I took a glaſs of it, and Alberti preſſed another upon me; a third was afterwards accepted;—the effect it had on me I thought very ſtrange, for I almoſt on the inſtant grew drowſy; my head fell upon my breaſt,

and

and in a few minutes I was in a profound ſleep.

When I awoke, I found myſelf, to my ſurpriſe, in an unknown apartment, and on raiſing my head, ſaw Alberti gazing on me; I was going to make ſome immediate enquiries of him, but he threw himſelf acroſs me on the bed, and entreated me to forgive him.

"But where am I?" I enquired.

"Firſt tell me, dear Roncorone," he replied, "that you will not hate me for what I have done."

"Hate you, Alberti! ſuch are you to me, and ſo has Nature attached you to my heart, that when I direct ſuch a ſentiment towards you, I muſt contemn myſelf. But anſwer me—where am I?"

"In Venice, Roncorone!"

"In

"In Venice! I can ſcarcely believe it; it ſeems to me an impoſſibility. But what, Alberti, have I to do in Venice?"

"To regain a part of that happineſs which you have loſt, to aſſume a different habit of life, and to hail the proſpects of returning tranquillity."

"Oh, vain and impracticable!" I exclaimed. "But how came I hither?"

"By ſtratagem," he replied. "I infuſed an opiate in your wine, and while you remained in a torpid ſtate, effected my purpoſe—a purpoſe to which my arguments had been unequal. I am now, Roncorone, at your mercy; dear friend! the love that I bear for you prompted me in this project. With miſery have I beheld your late ſufferings; with miſery have ſeen the torture of your body, and the diſtractions of your mind. I imagined them to be partly local; and

and being convinced that a change of place could alone avert that fate which was hanging over you, I uſed the preſent artifice, and have thus far ſucceeded; and if you love me, or reſpect yourſelf, you will reſide for a while under this roof, and ſuffer me in ſome degree to influence your conduct."

"Endeavour to make me whatever you pleaſe," I replied; "but be not angry if my nature will not bend on every occaſion: there may be an obſtinacy in it that will not ſubmit to controul; be not impatient, therefore, at my infirmities."

Alberti took me in his arms, aſſuring me that I was the chief object of his affection and concern, and that my habits of life ſhould not be oppoſed while I continued to reſide with him, unleſs friendſhip prompted it. Nature had placed in his breaſt one of the beſt of hearts, had ſtored it with feelings

the

the moſt lively, paſſions the moſt noble, affections the moſt permanent, and ſenſibilities the moſt acute; many times did he cheriſh me, and many times, like a watchful and eloquent angel, did he check the reſolve of ſelf-deſtruction. He would ſometimes induce me to leave my chamber, and to ſit with him in the balcony; he afterwards prevailed on me to go on the water, and at length drew me into ſome of the public walks of the city, though I entered into none of the pleaſures of thoſe who frequented them.

One day I met Salvini. The ſight of him agitated me exceedingly; and when his eyes encountered mine, the colour of his cheeks faded, and he ſeemed to ſtagger as he paſſed by me. His viſible agitation I imputed to a recent cauſe, and he being dreſſed

dreſſed in mourning, my ſuſpicion was ſtrengthened.

Alberti ſaw my diſtreſs, and haſtened home with me; the little tranquillity that I had regained, was moleſted; I was prompted to make ſome enquiries concerning Salvini, and the next morning was informed that he had abruptly left the city, and was gone into the country. His motives for departure I did not enquire into, nor did there appear to me any thing very extraordinary in the circumſtance;—I concluded that he was really penitent for his follies and errors; that the horrid fate of my wife hung heavily on his mind; and that my re-appearance, my evident affliction, and my ſkeleton form, were not, in the moments of contrition, to be regarded by him without extreme pain.

I now began to wiſh that I had not been drawn from my ſolitude;—Alberti was acquainted

acquainted with the nature of my thoughts; and, in order to baniſh them, he requeſted me to make an excurſion with him, and urged me ſo much, that at length I agreed to accompany him to Rome. The journey was of ſingular ſervice to the health of my friend, and I was benefited by it;—we arrived at the Papal dominions without any miſadventure; and, on entering the city, limited our continuance in it to a month.

The circle of Alberti's friends in this place was rather narrow, but highly reſpectable; and to a few of his more ſedate acquaintances I was introduced by him. My mind, however, was not long to be diverted; neither time, nor place, nor circumſtance could amend it; my looks of ſerenity were all affected, and my apparent eaſineſs was brought about by hypocriſy. I ſtill deſpiſed the ſhackles of life, ſtill panted for a rapid flight

flight to eternity. Rome to me was as good as Venice; every place was indeed alike, for in every place I was equally unhappy.

Alberti was no longer in the army; his father had been a German, and his mother an Italian; and being attached to the country of the latter, he had paſſed the greater part of his time in it even before he aſſumed the military character. His health was now almoſt perfectly re-eſtabliſhed; and having formed ſeveral new acquaintances, he expreſſed a wiſh to continue ſome conſiderable time in Rome:—I agreed ſtill to be with him, and we accordingly engaged a houſe for a year, and had it prepared for our immediate reception. Still perceiving that I was unwilling to be often abroad, he never oppoſed my inclination; but his natural vivacity was frequently checked

:cked by my gravity, and I had reaſon to
'poſe that no man poſſeſſed ſo large a
re of his love as he beſtowed upon me.
: however ſometimes made ſmall excur-
ıs into the country; and, when at Rome,
'as in the habit of endeavouring to ſooth
mind with religion.

Neither the hiſtory nor the antiquities of
ı once renowned city were intereſting to
;—the time, indeed, had been when I
d of the events recorded to have hap-
ıed in it, with a great degree of pleaſure,
delight, and of wonder; when my mind
owed the emperors and warriors of re-
ıte days through all the various ſcenes of
:erpriſe and glory, and attended them in
:ir proud proſperities, and alſo in their
:p adverſities. The ſages of paſt times
l filled me with admiration, while the
ıs of the lyre ſprung the ſecret mines of

ſenſibility and of ecſtacy. But I was no longer ſuſceptible of theſe feelings; Nature had received a blow from the hand of Apathy, of which ſhe had ſickened and mortified.

The amphitheatres, the temples of the Gods! What to me? Columns roſe, and ſurpriſed me not; ruins nodded, and I felt no awe. My contemplations reſted not on the wonders of art, the veſtiges of grandeur, or the ſtatues of the Pagan deities; but they were fixed, almoſt invariably fixed on the frailty of human life, and the inſtability of man's happineſs. I ſometimes indeed wandered out alone, pain warping my heart, and miſery hanging over my mind; chuſing the evening hour, I frequently ſtrolled into the ſuburbs, and found myſelf among pillars and arches, halls damp and deſolate, and recelles in which murder had

had ſecretly prowled. Still my own miſery occupied my thoughts; and as I reclined my ſallow cheek againſt the cold marble, I made echo each moment ſpeak the name of my dear lamented wife.

My ſoul at theſe times would ſicken, and I have been near fainting in the ſolitude; when I recovered little ſtrength, however, I went again to my home, to a bed in which there was no repoſe. Ah! why did I ſo? why did I not force my half-inclined heart to burſt aſunder at once, and lay me down amongſt the rubbiſh, and die neglected and unknown?

I might have crept into one of the ſmall and narrow cavities; reſpiration would ſoon have ceaſed, and I ſhould have made myſelf a ſecret grave, which the eye of man probably would not have peeped into till I had become bloated, corrupted, and defaced; nay, per-

haps not till I had wholly been converted into a whitened ſkeleton.

There might, in that caſe, have been food for the antiquaries—ha! ha!—"It is, in truth, the body of Cæſar, Sir! I have not a ſingle doubt but that is the fact! Wonderful diſcovery! precious relics of an illuſtrious hero! Examine the magnitude of each particular bone, how immenſe, gigantic! I will ſell you his ſcull for a thouſand ducats."—"A thouſand! it is too much; but I will give you two hundred for it."—"You are my very particular friend, and therefore ſhall have it at that price; but to ſuch terms from any other perſon, I aſſure you, I would not liſten a ſingle moment."

Ah, Roncorone! you might have had your pate handled by every virtuoſo with the moſt profound reſpect. Why did your

your ambition fall into ſuch an idle ſlumber?

* * * * * *

My friend Alberti became attached to a young, amiable, and wealthy woman who reſided in Rome, and on her heart he made a very favourable impreſſion; indeed, moſt women muſt have loved him, for he was as ſweet in his diſpoſition as in his countenance; and to his qualities of wit and good-humour were added the more tender ones of humanity and benevolence. He introduced me to his fair companion, and I inſtantly ſaw her merit; ſhe appeared to me in every reſpect a ſuitable partner for him; there was apparently a ſimilarity in their minds, a conformity in their manners; and it was evident that ſhe had many requiſites and recommendations, independent of the

beauty of her face, and of the extent of her fortune.

I felt a pleaſure, the firſt I had felt for many preceding months, when I contemplated the happy proſpect of Alberti; but ah! when he ſpoke ſeriouſly to me of his premeditated connexion,—when he talked of marriage, and demanded my opinion of it,—whether I would adviſe him to enter into it immediately, or wait till time ſhould further ſhew him the character and diſpoſition of the woman,—whether I did not conſider the ſtate as moſt felicitous and happy,—a thouſand remembrances ruſhed in my mind, and I was obliged to retire from him, being overcome by grief, without ſpeaking. I returned to him again, however, in the courſe of a few minutes, with the reſolution of being firm, when he gently preſſed me to his heart, and entreated me

to

to forgive him for the pain that he had ſo inadvertently occaſioned me.

"My feebleneſs is gone over," I replied, "and I am ſtrong again, at leaſt ſufficiently ſtrong to talk with my dear friend Alberti. The ſtate of marriage, that we were preparing to ſpeak of:—I had no long experience of what it is, yet——"

"Let us ſeparate, Roncorone," ſaid Alberti; "I will ſee you again in the evening; or ſhall we walk together? the day is invitingly fine."

"Ah! I ſee what your ſuſpicions are; but you are deceived. What! muſt a man never forget that he has been unfortunate? If ſuch were the general maxim of the world, who would be without a countenance of ſorrow? In that caſe, tears would be as plentiful as the rain of heaven, and the ſick ſighs of millions would make the

air obnoxious, and breed a general plague and peſtilence. Alberti! you talk as if philoſophy had no precepts. What if they are given in the moments of tranquillity, by him who is unaffected by the ill-chances of life, muſt we, who are ſo forcibly preached to, in the hour of actual miſery ſuſpect that we have been merely liſtening to ſophiſms, or that we have any cauſe to mourn beyond the hour in which we fooliſhly ſuffer our ſorrows to commence? Oh fie, Alberti! The ſtoics, and we have them even in theſe days, would regard you either as a man of weakneſs, or of depravity."

"We will talk on this ſubject hereafter," ſaid my friend; "pray let us walk. It is unuſual with you to deal in irony; but when you ſpeak it with wildneſs, I confeſs I have many fears for you."

"Fear

"Fear nothing; the ſeal of reaſon is ſtill unbroken, ſtill firmly ſtamped upon my mind. The ſtate of marriage—Oh how ſweet! a good and tender wife—how precious! how excellent! Do the occurrences of the world diſturb your temper? Fly to the ſympathetic boſom of your partner, and on it ſhe will lull you to a forgetfulneſs of them. Are misfortunes threatening to aſſail you? She will tell you not to deſpair; ſhe will diſſipate with her ſmiles the gloom of deſpondency, and the damp vapours of imagination. Ah, Alberti! had Heaven but ſpared *my* wife——"

"Oh! I lament that it did not!"

"But it tore her from me!"

"Talk not of it now, dear friend."

"Cruelly, cruelly tore her from me! her death, how horrid!"

"Father, Roncorone! you melt my soul as well as your own."

"Oh how horrid! in the flames she called on me! when she was shivering, she called on me!"

"You will destroy yourself, Roncorone."

"But I was not there, could not meet her outstretched hand! could not alleviate even one of her fierce tortures!"

"In Heaven there are no pains; there all is pleasure; there, at this moment, smiles your angelic wife!"

"True, comforter; you shall be still nearer to my heart for this consolation. Oh! that God would, as a compensation for my many afflictions, tell my spirit to rove with her from this moment eternally among the sweets of his paradise! The period of my life will not, I think, be a long one; the hour of my dissolution, I trust, is not far distant.

diſtant. Speed it, Holy Father! ſpeed it, righteous Comforter of mankind! Alberti, your hand! The woman of your choice is excellent; I have noticed her words, her actions, and placed her among the number of the worthy. Marry her—accept the hand ſhe offers to you; and as there is ſuch an incertitude in the affairs of human life, do not procraſtinate your happineſs, but attempt to ſecure it while it ſeems readily to be obtained. This is my advice; and now I will walk with you, for my mind is again ſoothed."

Though I gave Alberti this aſſurance, he regarded me with a melancholy aſpect, and his eyes expreſſed at once the whole language of compaſſion.

Some few days afterwards he informed me that every neceſſary arrangement had been made for the nuptials, which were to

be celebrated within a week.—"I am glad to hear it," I replied; "within a week, then, dear friend, you and I muſt part."

"How!" he cried; "part, Roncorone?"

"Yes, Alberti, I will withdraw; whither I have not yet determined; I ſhall, however, prefer a ſolitude to a city. If I have only inanimate things, or the beaſt tenants of a foreſt to gaze on, my ſpleen will never be excited; and even ſhould the ruſtics of the hamlet come to gape at me, while I yet ſeem a novelty, I ſhall conſider their inſtinct as harmleſs, and not chide them for impertinence when I find neither the marks of malice nor of deceit upon the brows of the men, nor the leers of wantonneſs in the eyes of the women—the general diſtinctions of the ſexes in crowded ſocieties. And yet, dear Alberti, I ſhall leave you with pain—with pain, which the ſelf-aſſurance

aſſurance of never ſeeing you thereafter will, in the moments of my weakneſs, ſerve to increaſe.

"You ſhall not go from me," ſaid Alberti; "indeed you muſt not!"

"Pray give me no oppoſition," I anſwered, "for what I ſaid was ſeriouſly intended; the happineſs, or rather the tranquillity of my life depends on it. The air of populous places ſuits not my conſtitution; and though I have not much obſervation to beſtow, new manners, new habits and cuſtoms perhaps may——no, I cannot flatter myſelf that they ever will amuſe me. Having neither miſanthropy in my heart, nor enthuſiaſm in my mind, I ſhall be no breeder of corruption; and it is probable that I ſhall only have time to chuſe a little ſpot of earth for a reſting-place for my bones, before the villagers will

have occaſion to ſay to each other—"Friends, the ſtranger is dead; let us paſs his body to the grave on the bier, and cover it over with a turf."

"And you *will* leave me, Roncorone? leave me in the happieſt moments of my life?"

"Could there have been a better ſeaſon for my departure," I replied, "ſince your happineſs depends not on me? If it did, I would ſtruggle with my feelings till they tore aſunder the ſtrings of my heart, ſooner than play the ingrate, and leave you. But as you love me, do not prevent my going; ſtrive not, I beſeech you, to impede my intended journey."

"I will not, dear, unhappy friend," he cried. "Grant me, however, one requeſt."

"What is that, Alberti?"

"Go

"Go not hence till after my marriage—not till a month afterwards; when that time ſhall have paſſed by, I promiſe to offer no further diſſuaſion, nor in any manner to check your inclinations. But ah, Roncorone! you muſt not think that even the poſſeſſion of my love, her charms, or her ſmiles will deter my mind from following you and your wretchedneſs, or ſtill the ſighs that will collect in my boſom when I think of and pity your deſtiny."

"Oh! is there on earth another friend like you?" I exclaimed, ruſhing into his arms, and melting into tenderneſs. My emotions ſilenced me for ſome time, and I had not power to raiſe my head from the tender and generous breaſt on which it had fallen.

"You conſent then?" ſaid Alberti, mildly; "you will, for the time I have mentioned, poſtpone your departure?"

"It

"It would be ingratitude in me," I replied, "not to comply with your requeſt; but as I can never more aſſume the maſk of pleaſure, never more admit either joy or merriment into my heart, which grief ſeems to have hollowed, think not unkindly of me if, when ſome happier friend ſhall ſtep forth to congratulate you on your attainment, my tongue ſhall remain in ſilence, and my features ſoften not at your felicity."

The anſwer of Alberti was in his uſual terms of tenderneſs and affection; but the intention which I had expreſſed to him ſeemed to touch him deeply, and I ſaw that he was internally ſtruggling to conquer very ardent emotions, and to reſtrain himſelf from theſe diſſuaſions, which he had promiſed to withhold from me at an after period.

Wh

When I retired at night to my chamber, I thought more ſeriouſly of my departure than I had done before.—"But whither ſhall I go?" I ſaid, addreſſing myſelf; "to what particular ſpot ſhall I direct my ſteps? Yet is not that a needleſs queſtion? Is not the world immenſe, infinite? Has not the hand of God, myſterious Creator! ſcattered his germs immeaſurably wide? The ſoil, the climate, they are nothing to me; let the one be barren and unfruitful, my appetites will not quarrel with it; and ſhould an unceaſing peſtilence attend the other, where will be the danger, now my health is irreparably injured? It may, indeed, ſerve to quicken the ſlow plagues which are now lazily creeping within me; but I will defy it to produce any original ones. In every nation, in every province, in every deſolate iſle there is a bed for the moſt wretched being,

being, for the ſorrieſt outcaſt, on which he may lay himſelf down, and ſleep away for ever his pain and anxieties;—my wants extend no further; to this they are limited, and *this* is a privilege of which the united malice of the world cannot deprive me."

Before the morning, however, I had brought my mind to make ſome arrangements, for which I felt ſomewhat the more tranquil, and, I believe, looked the happier. Alberti married, and, as I had promiſed, I attended at the eſpouſals, though it occaſioned me many a pain, and many an inward ſtruggle. Afflicted as my heart was, I wiſhed not my face to betray my ſufferings; but rather ſtrove to hide them under an artificial pleaſure, and alternately ſmiled upon my friend and his blooming bride. He had been preſent at my marriage, had ſtood by my ſide when the prieſt gave my

ſmiling

ſmiling Roſolie to me:—Oh! how difficult was the taſk to think on that circumſtance, and ſtill wear a placid aſpect!

The company that aſſembled at Alberti's houſe was not very numerous; many of the bride's relations and friends, however, were there, and the face of every perſon was animated by pleaſure. Alberti's tranſport was generally viſible, but even on that day the pitying ſigh of friendſhip did not fail to paſs over the full tide of his joy; it came upon, and almoſt diſſolved me. Blaming myſelf, however, as the cauſe of it, I made a ſtill more arduous attempt both to look and talk as if I ſtood in no need of ſuch exquiſite commiſeration and ſympathy; but, as he had well-ſtudied my manners and habits, I could not fully expect the impoſition to paſs undetected. His wife was no leſs attentive to me than himſelf, and ſhe often turned from the feſtive

tive party to addreſs herſelf to me, which ſhe did with a grace and ſweetneſs of tone of which I could not, intereſted principally in my own concerns as I had been, fail to be ſenſible.

Pleaſed was I, however, at the coming of night, and at the departure of ſuch of the company as made my retiring, without an excuſe, neither improper nor ſingular; I haſtened to my chamber, and my heart ſeemed incapable of throwing out its collected ſorrows with ſufficient ſpeed; I became almoſt as feeble as I was in childhood, and in that ſtate, ſome little time afterwards, did Alberti break in upon me.

"You are come to chide me," I ſaid, when I perceived him.

"Oh, no!" he cried, "rather to conſole, to comfort you."

"Attempt

"Attempt it not; the taſk would be wholly fruitleſs. Leave me, dear Alberti, to myſelf, for my impoſitions will not ſtretch any further. Good night—God bleſs you!"

"Do not let me leave you thus miſerable," he ſaid; "return to the company, cruſh this unavailing ſorrow, this deſtructive anguiſh!"

"No, no," I replied; "leave me, I again entreat you; concern not yourſelf for me; ſleep and happy dreams I may enjoy before the morning. Go, Alberti; your fair bride is expecting you, for the hour is growing late. Caſt not a thought on a forlorn and pining wretch like me; I ſhould be tempted to curſe myſelf if I were to damp one of your joys at ſuch a ſeaſon as this. Good night! and the felicities of love attend you!"

"Good

"Good night! good night!" he exclaimed; "and may the balm of Heaven be poured into your wounded ſoul by the ſwifteſt and moſt benevolent of its miniſtering ſpirits."

The two firſt weeks of the limited month were ſpent by me with more tranquillity and ſmoothneſs of temper than I could have previouſly expected; and I waited, without any apparent anxiety or impatience, for the paſſing by of the two which were next to follow. I had even accuſtomed myſelf to ſpeak of my removal calmly to Alberti; to diſcourſe collectedly with him concerning the ſpot which I had choſen for my retreat; and to demand his opinion on ſome little arrangements which were neceſſary to be made before I quitted Rome, and all other thick reſidences of men.

He

He forgot not the promiſe he had made to me, though I ſaw the increaſe of his concern as the period of our ſeparation advanced; his wife, however, whoſe mind and heart, if poſſible, rivalled her ſweet and innocent countenance, was under no ſuch reſtraint, and for a while ſhe importuned me to break my deſign, and ſtill to continue an inmate with them; but afterwards, I conjectured by his deſire, ſhe dropped her entreaties on the ſubject, and only ſeemed to lament the neceſſity of her ſilence, and to regret the diviſion which was about to take place between me and her truly worthy huſband.

Such was the poſture of my affairs, and the ſtate of my concerns, when one morning, exactly after a reſidence of eight months in Rome, in the church of St. Peter * * *

* * * * * *

Yet

Yet may it not be raſh to touch on that circumſtance? May not bad and dangerous effects ariſe from it? Be it ſo; ſtill I will on——

——One morning, in the church of St. Peter, my devotions, as well as thoſe of many other perſons, were interrupted by the ſhrieks of a female; I haſtily raiſed my head, and looking towards the ſpot from whence the noiſe ſeemed to come, ſaw a woman ſink on the pavement. A number of people ſoon gathered around her; I could not get near to her, nor could I ſee her face; and in a few minutes ſhe was carried out of the church, and the ſervice again continued.

Three days after this occurrence, which, being a common one, I had almoſt forgotten, as I was entering Alberti's houſe, a woman, whom I had obſerved ſome time before, came

up

P to me in a haſty and ſingular manner; vith extreme agitation ſhe delivered to me a letter, and at the ſame time ſighed heavily, and preſſed my hand. She held her veil ſo as every feature was concealed; and having given me the paper, ran from me, and turning down a narrow ſtreet, inſtantly diſappeared.

This was ſtrange; I haſtened into the houſe, unfolded the paper, and found that it contained the following warning:—

"Roncorone, beware! miſery is in Rome; fly from it—inſtantly fly from it!"

I was ſtartled for a moment:—the note was evidently from a female hand; but I knew not the characters, nor could imagine to what miſery or danger it alluded. My ſurpriſe, however, was greater than my alarm. Alberti and his wife were gone into the country for two days, I having declined

accompanying them; but thinking the monition idle, on the following morning I went again into the ſtreets, without any ſerious, or even light apprehenſion. I walked about a conſiderable time, and looked ſhrewdly at many faces; but diſcovering in none of them the features of an enemy, I returned home again.

I knocked at the door; the ſtranger was again at my elbow. She thruſt another paper into my hand, groaned dreadfully, and vaniſhed before I had time to leave the portico. My aſtoniſhment increaſed; I hurried through the hall, and reaching my chamber, opened this ſecond myſterious ſcroll. Horrid and dreadful! it ſaid—it ſaid—

"Roſolie lives! but the hour of her diſſolution is near; ſhe has ſeen Roncorone—her beloved, her bleſſed Roncorone! Holy

be

be the walls of St. Peter for it! Huſband, they told me you were dead—they have abuſed me—God, how abuſed me! I am innocent—I am innocent! But I am polluted—aye, Roncorone, ſtained and polluted! Oh my dear huſband! I ſhall never be near you again; my hand ſhall never touch, my eyes never ſee you more. Happier would it be if the whole world were placed between us, if unnavigated ſeas rolled betwixt your virtue and my impurities; I would not have the ſame wind blow on us, leſt, in its paſſage to you, it ſhould receive a moſt foul taint from the once chaſte partner of your boſom. Oh! the contagion of my body ſprings up into my brain, and renews my crazineſs! Huſband, if I may now call you by a name that once was tender to me, that in days gone by was ſweet to utter,—huſband, farewel eter-

nally! If my eyes ſhall open in the regions of purer light, they will ever be inclining to the leſſer world, to watch for the pilgrim ſpirit of Roncorone. Farewel! but fly from Rome! fly from Rome!"

I ſunk on the floor; but my ſenſes did not wholly leave me, though my brain heated quickly. Living! aſtoniſhing! beyond every thing aſtoniſhing! In Rome! ſo near to me! Pol—polluted! God of Heaven and of earth! living and polluted! For a moment I ſtrove to regard it as a fiction more monſtrous and unnatural than any of thoſe of antiquity; but her own hand, her well-known hand confirmed it a reality.

Polluted!

I grew frenzied, mad as the northern blaſt, as the billows of the ſea it bluſtered upon—nay, even as a volcano at the moment of its moſt dreadful exploſion. I impiouſly

piouſly curſed the Heavens above my head, the earth, every thing that moved on it, every damnable biped that bore the name of man—man! that combination of brutal matter, that heterogeneous monſter, which a perverted intercourſe of ape and wolf, producing rankneſs, ſavageneſs, and deformity, could not equal.

I did not groan, but I ſhrieked, and dried my mouth with curſes; ſtupidity, however, afterwards ſunk me on the floor, and in that ſtate I continued, till Alberti, who had juſt returned to Rome, came in, and rouſed me from my lethargy.

"Who is the villain?" I cried, ſeizing and graſping him; "who is the villain? I'll ſtake my life againſt your's, Alberti, it is that abominable fiend, that ſon of hell, Salvini!"

My ſenſes again deſerted me, and the explanation was partly given to my friend by the horrid ſcroll that lay at his feet.

* * * * * *

About ten days after this circumſtance, and what paſſed in the interval I know not, I thus addreſſed Alberti:—"I will find out my wife, and we will again be united. If a ſcore of barbarians have uſed her, is ſhe the leſs innocent? She fell not by guilt; ſhe ſinned not in the ferment of her paſſions; ſhe was not loſt in the glutinous ſea of luſt. She ſhall be near my heart again!"

"Dear Roncorone!" ſaid Alberti, "this may be ſome ſtratagem of the deſigning. Recollect the fire; your wife muſt be, alas! loſt to you for ever!"

"She is not. If it be true that there is a God in Heaven, a man on earth, that there are changes in the ſeaſons, or any qualities in

in the elements, ſo true it is that ſhe is living."

"'Tis ſtrange!—very ſtrange!"

"But it is true, fatally true!"

"Dreadful!" exclaimed Alberti, ſhrinking.

"Horrid! horrid! Oh Alberti! had ſhe been confined in the flames a year before ſhe loſt the ſenſe of feeling them, it would not havee qualled this. Who is the villain? Who ſhould it be but Salvini? Spare me diſtraction a little while; let me pluck out the heart of that rank monſter, and what I may be thereafter I know not, care not. Alberti, ſearch with me—aſſiſt me in diſcovering the ſufferer!"

I broke from him, and ran wildly into the ſtreets;—he followed, and his aſſiduities alone ſaved me from deſtruction; for my actions were thoſe of a mad man, and it

was a conſiderable time before he could draw me again into the houſe. He had no power to calm me; but, in ſome degree, he convinced me that no immediate diſcovery could poſſibly be made of this myſterious and horrid buſineſs, and that precipitation on my part might altogether fruſtrate my deſigns. He did not preach patience to me; for his own trembling lips and colourleſs face ſhewed me how much he was agitated.

I raved away the night, referring often to the diſtracted epiſtle of my wife; and the body of the ſun, whoſe beams were caſt on me in the morning, could ſcarcely bear a greater degree of heat than my brain.

Orders were given to the ſervants to ſtop the bearer of any letter that might be addreſſed to me; and in the afternoon a boy was brought before me, and with him a folded

folded paper, directed by the ſame hand that had written the firſt myſterious note, and containing theſe words:—

"Be merciful, Signor, to one who has ſinned, and whoſe repentance hourly torments her heart. Your wife is bending over the grave, and ſurely I am not far from it. Signor, I am a guilty wretch, yet do not curſe me till you have heard me. Admit me to-morrow morning at eight; if you kill me on the ſpot, I ſhall not, even in the moments of death, ſuffer more pain than I now do, and for a long time paſt have done. Attempt not to diſcover me to-night, for your ſearch would end in diſappointment. The bearer of this note knows nothing of me, nor will he ever ſee me more; yet by him, if he be truſty, and obſerve my directions, I ſhall learn whether you will to-

morrow hear the confeſſions of a contrite and repentant wretch."

I read, wondered, trembled, almoſt fainted. The boy told me that a woman, whom he had met in a ſtreet, which he named, had given him ſome money to convey the letter to me; and that ſhe had charged him, if I were at home, to return by the ſame ſtreet, and walk through it with his head uncovered, by which, though ſhe intended to be inviſible, ſhe ſhould know whether he had ſucceeded. The boy ſpoke with much ſimplicity; and fearing a diſcovery impracticable, though my tortured ſoul prompted me to aim at it, I ſuffered him to depart, nor attempted to follow him. I however charged him to obſerve ſtrictly the ſtrange directions of the hidden woman, and enforced them by doubling his reward.

I was

I was waking the whole night; and during ſome part of it, my frame was ſo convulſed, that Alberti, who, at different periods, left the apartment of his wife to viſit me, thought that Death was ſeriouſly commencing his operations on me.

Roſolie was in my ſoul, in my eye; I ſaw her pale, withered, dying. How dreadful is the intellectual ſight! It then made me groan, and almoſt drew my eyes out of their ſockets. I heard the clock ſtrike eight; Alberti could ſcarcely hold me. In about five minutes the myſterious woman came trembling into the room; when I ran up to her, ſeized her by the arm, and tearing off her veil, beheld Lucilla, the woman who had formerly reſided with me, and who I thought had periſhed in the flames with her miſtreſs, and with the man that attended on me.

She ſhrieked, and fell on the floor, and my own enervated limbs only bore me to the arms of Alberti before they wholly failed me.

It was ſome conſiderable time ere the wretch could be perſuaded to raiſe her head; ſhe afterwards, in burſts of agony, horror, and remorſe, gave me the following ſhocking narrative.

Before I had engaged her to wait upon my wife, ſhe and Stephano, my other ſervant, had entered into an illicit connexion, which was ſubſequently continued under my roof. Having made her ſubſervient to his purpoſe, he not only withdrew a promiſe of marriage, on which ſhe had fooliſhly relied, but totally reverſed his ſpeech, his manners, and conduct, and often treated her with uncommon ſeverity and brutality. Pregnancy was the effect of their cohabitation; the family of

the

the girl being reſpectable, and dreading the reſentment and ſhame that would fall on her, ſhe endeavoured to make him what he formerly appeared, and profeſſed to be, and alſo renewed her entreaties; but was again inhumanly repulſed. For ſeveral days the villain's ſavage temper was diſplayed on every occaſion, and blows often ſucceeded the curſes which he heaped, without meaſure, upon his aſtoniſhed victim, who confeſſed to me that ſhe had become ſuch by the impulſe of a real affection.

It was the cauſe of much ſurpriſe, and alſo of equal pleaſure, when ſhe afterwards diſcovered in him a great degree of kindneſs, and heard him talk diſtantly of making her the reparation ſhe had demanded; but that, he informed her, muſt be on conditions which he would ſoon make known to her. He aſſured her that her own conduct

duct muſt determine whether the union ſhould take place immediately, or be for ever put aſide; and having drawn from the anxious girl an aſſurance that ſhe would be guided by him in every circumſtance, if he would avert her impending infamy, and the curſes of an honeſt and reputable father, the diabolical villain one evening, when I and Roſolie were from home, began his projects, of which ſhe had no conception or intimation, and hurried her to a place ſome diſtance from the houſe, where, to her aſtoniſhment, ſhe beheld Signor Salvini, who ſeemed to have been impatiently waiting for their arrival.

She now began to fear that ſome horrible deſigns were forming; and her conjecture was right, for ſhe was deſired to become an agent in the perpetration of them: and hoping to make her willingly ſuch, Salvini

forced

forced upon her a large ſum of money. It was now too late to retract; a ſavage reſolution was fixed on the brow of Stephano, who cautioned her with his finger, while he aſſured Salvini that any project he might form, ſhould be entered into at whatever time he directed, or thought moſt proper.

After this they had ſeveral meetings, all equally private, and tending to the ruin of me and Roſolie; and the gold of Salvini moſt plentifully fed the avarice of Stephano. The plot for burning of my houſe, and carrying off my wife, was now planned and debated on. Lucilla, horror-ſtricken, refuſed to become an acceſſary; but Stephano ſwore if ſhe did not conſent to it, ſhe ſhould not live to give birth to her child. Salvini, having endeavoured, with fiendlike cunning, to laugh away her ſcruples of conſcience, propoſed an oath in order to bind her,

her, when he found his diabolical irony had no effect on her. Stephano's eyes expreſſed at a ſingle glance the ſtate of his ſavage ſoul; and dreading his malice and cruelty, ſhe ſwore to aid them in their deſigns.

I trembled while, with evident anguiſh, the girl continued to inform me that—

After this meeting, Stephano ſeldom ſuffered her to be out of his ſight; and if at any time ſhe attempted to argue with him, or ſeemed to ſhrink from the vow of compulſion, it only drew from him horrid threats and brutal language.

He one evening ſaid to her, "This is the night of our experiment; the Signor is from home; he is gone to Venice to ſee Signor Alberti, who has had an ugly cut in the dark, which is a circumſtance that highly favours our plot. Mind how you conduct yourſelf; follow my directions in every thing,

thing, and our reward will be a golden one." She was running from him with terror; but perceiving that her deſign was to fly to her miſtreſs, he threw her on the floor, and dragged her back again. Her fear, and the ſtate in which ſhe then unhappily was, made her ſubmiſſive; ſhe entreated him to do her no injury, and he releaſed her, but upon the condition of her not placing herſelf in the way of her Lady, and alſo on her promiſe of accompanying him and Salvini without noiſe or reſiſtance.

She attended her miſtreſs to her chamber about eleven o'clock; but, in order to keep her from prating, Stephano, after my wife had entered the apartment, placed himſelf at the door, with an unſheathed ſtiletto in his hand, of which circumſtance he had previouſly acquainted the wretched girl. Roſolie ſoon diſmiſſed Lucilla, who afterwards

wards went down the ſtairs with the awaiting Stephano, and in the courſe of a few minutes Salvini was ſilently, and with great caution, admitted into the houſe. Above half an hour was ſpent by theſe helliſh contrivers in ſecret talk, when the former went up ſtairs, and returning almoſt immediately, aſſured Salvini that the work was done.

The petrified Lucilla, not at that inſtant recollecting the plot that had been recently hinted to her, thought that theſe ambiguous words of her ſeducer probably alluded to the murder of her miſtreſs; but after a few minutes of ſilent ſuſpenſe, ſhe heard a crackling noiſe, and ſaw that ſome part of the building was on fire, when Salvini ſeized her by the arm, and hurried her to a carriage at ſome diſtance from the houſe, while his acceſſary ran up to the chambers.

Lucilla waited not long before he came to her, bearing Roſolie totally ſenſeleſs. Deteſting him now as much as ſhe had once loved him, ſhe called him a villain and a murderer, and attempted to ſhriek for aſſiſtance; but both he and Salvini prevented her by means inſufferably ſevere, which almoſt brought ſuffocation upon her.

When Roſolie recovered from her ſwoon, ſhrinking and with terror, ſhe aſked where ſhe was, the carriage being darkened ſo as to keep out the moon-beams. To her queſtion Stephano replied that he was taking her to the Signor; but Salvini remained ſilent, and Lucilla was ſcarcely allowed to utter a ſingle word. Stephano informed his miſtreſs that it was not probable any part of the building could withſtand the flames; and that, as there were no houſes near to it, no aſſiſtance could be expected. He added,

that

that he had thought it moſt proper to convey her from the danger as ſpeedily as poſſible, and that he had taken the precaution of diſpatching a meſſenger to the Signor at Venice, to apprize him cautiouſly of the accident, and prepare him to receive her without any exceſſive alarm or aſtoniſhment on her arrival.

This part of the villain's artifice was managed with ſufficient ſkill, and drew forth the thanks and acknowledgments of my betrayed and unſuſpecting wife.

They had travelled nearly an hour when the coach ſtopped, and Salvini got out of it; the day was but juſt breaking, and he was muffled up ſo as to prevent Roſolie making any diſcovery of his perſon as he quitted the vehicle. Had ſhe enquired who he was, Stephano was doubtleſs prepared with an anſwer; but ſhe was too much agitated

:ated to notice particularly what ſeemed of ɔut littlè importance.

Stephano deſcended with Salvini, on the pretence of being called by the driver to aſſiſt in diſentangling ſome part of the harneſs; but he firſt ſpoke ſome few words to Lucilla, which, though inexplicable to Roſolie, were fully underſtood by the perſon to whom they were addreſſed. The almoſt ſtupified girl therefore ſat ſilent and motionleſs; Stephano, however, returned almoſt inſtantly, unaccompanied, and ſpringing into the carriage (the freedom of which action he hypocritically hoped his Lady would pardon), he ordered the driver, a wretch trained into villany by Salvini, to go forward.

They had proceeded but a little further, when a man rode up to the door, and having enquired the names of the travellers, informed

informed Roſolie that Signor Roncorone had diſpatched him to ſay that he had left Venice on a very urgent occaſion, relating to the affairs of Signor Alberti, who had died within the laſt ſix hours, which he would explain to her at their meeting; and that he had ſent a carriage and a lady of his acquaintance to take her to the place where he ſhould be anxiouſly expecting her.

Groſs as the improbability was, it did not ſtrike Roſolie; too greatly agitated to combine circumſtances, and calculate time, ſhe left the coach that had brought her from her burning houſe, and deſired Lucilla to go with her. The girl now uttered a piercing ſhriek; for ſhe ſaw her Lady ſeized rudely by the ruffian who had told the abominable lie, and hurried away by him. Stephano, enraged by her conduct, ſavagely ſtruck her on the forehead, and in a threatening manner

drew his cold dagger acroſs her throat; nor did ſhe ſee her miſtreſs for the courſe of three weeks after this period, when ſhe found her at Rome, almoſt frenzied, guarded by Stephano, and—and—defiled by Salvini!

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Oh! this taſk is too much! too horrid!

* * * * * *

Ye hours, how unheeded have you paſſed! ye ſeaſons, I am almoſt unconſcious of your change! The breezes of Spring may have blown ſweetly over the heads of the mountains; Summer may have clothed the earth with flowers more bright and luxuriant than thoſe of her departed ſiſter; under the ſunny ſmiles of Autumn the fruit of the vineyards ripened into delicious perfection; and lo! now over the ſummit of every precipice, Winter wrathfully whirls his immenſe ſtores of hail and ſnow, and unchains all his foul

ful and turbulent ſpirits, and gives them to the elements!

To thy cell, Rencorone—to thy cell for a little while,—then to thy cold damp grave for ever! That circumſcribed domain, in which man can diſplay neither his conſequence nor inſignificance,—where nothing is dependant on him, and where, though he may have been a ſceptred tyrant, the ſcourge, the dread of millions—the ſorrieſt reptile ſhall aſſert its ſuperiority over him. The mortal, when reflecting on this ſtate, and knowing it to be inevitable, generally feels a ſenſation, as if the cold worms had begun to twine around the veins of his body, though the ſpirit be ſtill the tenant of it. No ſuch emotions, however, trouble me; I ſhrink not at the proſpect, ſee no gloom hanging over it; but if Death were to ſend one of his myſterious harbingers to me,

ne, the monſter, hideous and frightful as he night appear, ſhould not find me loath to ve led by him to the world of ſhadows. We ſojourn not long in that dark country; we go through it into regions exquiſitely bright, there to reſide, as we are told—aſſurance too ſweet for either doubt or diſbelief!—for——

Wife of my ſoul! the period of our re-union is at hand; deſcend—come down to me, for under thy guidance my flight to Heaven will be more rapturous. Alberti, I would thy friendly hand could lay me in the earth! Yet why, dear, generous man, ſhould I wiſh to give another pang to thee? No, no! it will be better to die unknown and unregretted.

The panegyrics beſtowed on departed Princes are often known to be undeſerved; on the tombs of Nobles the ſculptor may

ful and turbulent [illegible] cut the cha-
to the elements! [illegible]aph, that tells a

To thy cel[illegible]les near to it. It is
a little whil[illegible] grave of the peaſant on
for ever! [illegible] with a ſerene pleaſure;—
which [illegible] are recorded only in the memo-
quenc[illegible] his few ſimple friends; his widow
is d[illegible] the defending briar; his children's
m[illegible] root up every weed; the finger
[illegible] honeſt man points towards the turf—
the manſion of a ſleeping brother; and the
affectionate ſwain, as he bends over it, gives
a voluntary tear to him who has ſighed for
thouſands. Pride! I want not thy honours
and trophies. Humility! may my ſleep
be as tranquil as thine, and my hour of
waking as glorious! But I ſhall have no
widow to direct the defending briar, no little
children to root the weeds from my grave!

The

.e head-ache, the heart-ache are ſub-
.ng. After this long pauſe, and on the continuance of Lucilla's information, I pro-
ceed:—

Salvini ſoon after quitted Rome, as the violence he had done to Roſolie had diſtracted her; ſhe raved franticly for her huſband, and conſtantly endeavoured to make herſelf miſtreſs of ſome inſtrument of deſtruction. The ſight of Stephano was evidently horrid to her; a conſiderable time elapſed before ſhe would allow even Lucilla to come near to her; and it was two months before that wretched girl was permitted to extenuate her ſeeming guilt by a relation of melancholy facts and incidents which concerned the conſpiracy. This information, however, was not at that time perfectly underſtood; for Roſolie, at ſome periods, poſſeſſed a faint remembrance only

of what was paſt, and ſhe would earneſtly talk of returning to her huſband; but her health, as well as her mind, were rapidly decaying, and Lucilla ſaw that ſhe was ſtepping towards the grave.

The girl aſſured me that ſhe frequently expoſtulated with the brutal Stephano; but the accumulating gold of Salvini made him every day more and more a villain. Roufed at length by the cruelty of the monſter, Lucilla was thrown into ſo violent a paſſion, that a premature labour ſucceeded, and the fruit of her deteſted intercourſe came into the world unperfected.

It was nearly a month before ſhe again ſaw her wretched miſtreſs, whom ſhe found almoſt in the ſtate of non-exiſtence. The houſe that Salvini had placed them in was ſmall and private; but it was his intention ſoon to remove them to ſome place ſtill more

more retired. Stephano was ſenſual and luxurious; hating Lucilla now for what he called her affected humanity, he brought into the houſe a young proſtitute, and openly cohabited with her, while the wine furniſhed by Salvini kept him in a ſtate of almoſt continual intoxication. He beſtowed the groſſeſt names upon my ſacrificed wife; and while he laughed at her fits and diſtractions, which he believed to be artifices, he cenſured Salvini for not returning to enjoy again what he had firſt, at much expence and trouble, made himſelf maſter of.—Fiend! devil!

The repentant Lucilla had yet a faint hope that her miſtreſs would ſurvive. To eſcape, guarded as ſhe was, ſhe knew to be impoſſible; but, in order to obtain ſome ſmall comfort for her Lady, ſhe again attempted to ſooth the brute, and again

took him into her arms, even when ſhe wiſhed a dagger in his breaſt.

Having endeavoured to divert the moody chimeras of Roſolie, which were akin to inſanity, and alſo to teach or bring back ſome degree of fortitude to a mind that was ſometimes depreſſed by ſtupidity, and at other times torn by frenzy, ſhe prevailed on Stephano to let them go abroad for a few hours; and three times afterwards had ſhe induced him to accompany them to the church of St. Peter.

It was on their laſt viſit to that place that Roſolie diſcovered me;—I was obſerved by neither Lucilla nor Stephano; and as my wife did not ſpeak till after ſhe was carried home, and left to the care of her diſtreſſed companion, the hell-hound of Salvini knew nothing of the diſcovery, nor in any wiſe troubled

troubled himſelf concerning the fainting of his priſoner.

Roſolie knew ſhe was not deceiving herſelf in reſpect to my appearance, the reality of which was not doubted by her; it created a fixed and frightful horror, and ſhe ſpoke of it to Lucilla with a ſolemnity ſo dreadful, and with ſuch a motionleſs countenance, that the girl was terrified by looking upon and hearing her. Roſolie requeſted her to write the note which had firſt excited my wonder, and, if poſſible, to convey it to me; but Lucilla was conſcious of the difficulty of performing the taſk, even admitting that I was in Rome, and ſhe knew that it muſt be attempted by ſtratagem, in which there would be conſiderable peril.

The chamber in which they reſided, or rather in which they were confined, was at

the back of the houſe, and the window belonging to it near the premiſes of another perſon; in the adjoining yard they had daily ſeen a woman walking, and as ſhe appeared too humble to be the owner of the houſe, Lucilla concluded that ſhe was only put in the poſſeſſion of it during the abſence of her employers. The eyes of this perſon had often met thoſe of the priſoners, who, through fear, had never ſpoken to her; and Lucilla, ſtruck by the peculiar, inquiſitive, and apparently anxious manner of her regard, thought it poſſible that ſhe would be inclined to ſerve them, if they were, in proper terms, to require her aſſiſtance. She therefore wrote a ſhort note to her, entreating, in an affecting manner, that ſhe would enquire at the hotels and other places where it was likely to obtain intelligence whether Signor Roncorone

Roncorone were at Rome, and if he were, in what part of the city he reſided.

She informed the woman that this requeſt came from victims of cruelty and oppreſſion, but earneſtly begged her to obſerve ſecrecy; and not to ſpeak to the Signor if ſhe ſhould diſcover him. Incloſing a piece of money, ſhe waited anxiouſly for the appearance of the ſtranger, on whoſe approach ſhe threw it over the wall, and trembled while the receiver was taking it from the ground. The woman unfolded the paper, peruſed it earneſtly, looked compaſſionately at the ſupplicating and agitated priſoners, and, by her geſtures, led them to ſuppoſe that ſhe would willingly endeavour to befriend them.

Lucilla felt a degree of comfort, and talked of their deliverance by me; the horror of Roſolie, however, increaſed, and ſhe ſolemnly vowed never to ſee me more;

but ſhe feared that I might be diſcovered, and murdered either by Salvini or Stephano. This idea now principally occupied her mind; in conſequence of which, her words were wild and extravagant, and ſhe was terrified by the moſt trifling noiſe.

Lucilla, whom her miſtreſs, in her moſt compoſed moments, had forgiven, having prevailed on her to lie down, went to play the hypocrite before Stephano, in order that ſhe might induce him to abate his ſeverity. Knowing his avarice to be great, ſhe carried with her a diamond croſs of conſiderable value, which ſhe perſuaded him ſhe had purloined from her miſtreſs, who, ſhe added, ſignificantly, could have no further occaſion for it.

Stephano received it with pleaſure; he ſaw not through the artifice of Lucilla, but careſſed her repeatedly; at the ſame time he commended her change of ſentiments,

vowed

vowed to diſcard the wanton he had taken into the houſe, informed her that he expected Salvini in Rome in the courſe of a fortnight, when he hoped circumſtances would become more favourable in the eyes of his Lady, whoſe unhappineſs he conceived to be ſelf-impoſed; and again, as he had many times before, ſolemnly ſwore that his late maſter had long become inſenſible of the departure of his wife, he having died in Venice of a fever, ſuppoſed to be brought upon him by his attendance on Signor Alberti.

Lucilla did not dare either to contradict or oppoſe the deſpicable liar, well knowing the raſhneſs and ferocity of his temper; on the contrary, ſhe ſeemed to accord to all he ſaid, but hinted that ſhe thought the health of her miſtreſs was very bad. She proceeded to tell him that medical aſſiſtance was abſolutely neceſſary, and requeſted him to let

her go out on the following day to purchaſe ſome medicines, which, ſhe added, might be adminiſtered by her without the intruſion of a phyſician.

This, however, Stephano haſtily refuſed, dropping at the ſame time ſome doubts reſpecting her ſincerity; when aſſuming an air of aſſurance, ſhe replied, if ſhe were ſuſpected, ſhe ſhould regard her own intereſt only, and ſnatching up the diamonds which ſhe had placed upon a table, was preparing to leave the room; but Stephano detained her, and fawningly drawing her towards him, begged her not to be ſo warm and impetuous. Lucilla now, for the firſt time, ſaw her power, and endeavoured to increaſe it; what humanity could not accompliſh, ſhe found the gift of any thing that was valuable would be fully adequate to; and alſo that pride and courage aided her project better than fear and abjectneſs, which

which ſhe, on the inſtant, reſolved to put aſide, and to talk to him with the ſpirit of an offended and irritated woman.

It was with ſatisfaction that ſhe perceived this conduct on her part was likely to produce the conſequences ſhe had wiſhed for. Stephano's penetration was conſiderably leſs than his villany; he believed that the girl was actually now as depraved as he had been long endeavouring to make her; he promiſed her ſhe ſhould go out on the following day as ſhe had deſired; and urged her to take more valuables from the caſket of her miſtreſs, which had been ſnatched up by her when ſhe found her houſe on fire, and afterwards brought to Rome, and forgotten. Lucilla promiſed to do this whenever a favourable opportunity ſhould preſent itſelf, but warned him at no time thereafter to place his doubts and ſuſpicions on her.

She

She then returned to the chamber of Roſolie, who had fallen into an uneaſy ſleep, in which, however, ſhe continued ſome conſiderable time. At length ſhe ſtarted from a terrifying dream; but Lucilla called her to a ſenſe of her ſituation, and leading her to the window, they both ſat down, and ſoon after ſaw their unknown friend in the adjoining garden, holding up a folded paper.

Roſolie inſtantly fell back in her chair, and Lucilla ſcreamed as ſhe threw up the ſaſh. The woman had put the note on the end of a long oſier, and mounting a garden ladder, ſhe extended her arm, and Lucilla received the billet. This being performed, the ſtranger kiſſed her hand, and retired, and Lucilla unfolded the little packet, which was formed of the money that had accompanied her written entreaties, and of a paper

which,

which informed them that, after a long enquiry, ſhe had diſcovered Signor Roncorone, as well as a gentleman, his friend, of the name of Alberti, was living in Rome. She particularly deſcribed the place in which they reſided, but declined all pecuniary acknowledgment, and aſſured them that if ſhe had the ability of doing them any further ſervice, and they could contrive to make their wants known, inclination would not be wanting in her.

My poor Roſolie was troubled with hyſterical emotions while ſhe liſtened to Lucilla, who informed her of her project of delivering, if poſſible, the note to me on the following day. The girl entreated her miſtreſs to let her make a full diſcloſure of circumſtances; but ſeeing the dreadful effects of her propoſal, ſhe forbore to ſpeak of it again.

The

The next day Lucilla availed herſelf of Stephano's promiſe; and having bought a few drugs of a chemiſt, ſhe enquired her way to the houſe occupied by me and my friend, when, following her directions, ſhe met me in the ſtreet, and purſuing me to my home, delivered the billet as I have mentioned before.

Stephano was a great epicure: Lucilla, knowing this to be his character, made ſome purchaſes for his palate; and laying them before him on her return, again won his regard, and cauſed him to renew his former proteſtations, to which ſhe ſeemed to liſten with approbation.

Her miſtreſs, who was waiting with impatience, heard her information with terror; and before the approach of night, her illneſs had increaſed moſt alarmingly. She was continually repeating an anxious wiſh

that

that I would leave Rome; her next desire was to die; and the consciousness of the rapid decay of her faculties formed the most soothing of her reflections. She persuaded Lucilla to conceal her extreme indisposition from the fiend Stephano, whose very name was dreadful to her, and whose sight she could not for the space of a moment endure; and also to deliver a second note to me, if it were practicable, in case I should not have left the city. The questions which she asked the girl respecting me and my appearance were shocking in their consequences; and the account that was given to her of my languor and evident affliction caused her to speak in terms more strange and melancholy than she had ever used before.

With her late accustomed dissimulation, and another valuable having previously been

been placed in the greedy hand of Stephano, Lucilla accompliſhed the laſt-formed project; but her hypocriſy afterwards grew more feeble, and ſhe watched the increaſing faintneſs and frequent diſtortions of the face of her miſtreſs, who ſtill conjured her to be ſilent, and to let death come on her without apprizing Stephano of it;—but after many ſick and painful ruminations, and finding that I ſtill remained in Rome, and alſo that ſhe was moſt certainly now ſtepping into eternity, ſhe altered her original intention, and, after many efforts, wrote that horrid note which informed me of her exiſtence and miſeries. Still ſhe was determined on concealing herſelf from my eyes, and would not attend to the ſolicitations for diſcovery made by Lucilla, who, though oppoſed, reſolved to place each occurrence within my knowledge;—ſhe dreaded the event

event of it, but having formed the ſcheme, reſted not till ſhe had carried it into execution.

In this circumſtance, however, ſhe unfortunately excited the ſuſpicions of Stephano;—her unuſual abſence, and her viſible agitation on her return, ſhe could no longer hypocritically account for, when, fearing that ſhe had been plotting abroad, he commanded her to retire to her miſtreſs's room, and vowed that ſhe ſhould leave it no more. His brutality, which had for ſeveral preceding days been inactive, now ſeemed to be burſting forth with redoubled violence. Though her rage was internally ſwelling, ſhe knew that to vent it at this time would be premature; ſhe therefore only requeſted him to ſend a medical man to her Lady, who, ſhe believed, was dying, and then withdrew as he had deſired her.

Stephano

Stephano looked ſhrewdly at her as ſhe left him, and ſtopped her for a moment to gaze earneſtly in her face; but he could not much alter her countenance, as her confidence happily revived under his ſcrutiny, though it totally failed as ſoon as ſhe turned from him towards the priſon-room of her expiring miſtreſs. Stephano, believing that Roſolie was indeed in the ſtate of danger that had been mentioned to him, ſent immediately for a phyſician, whom he brought before my almoſt inſenſible wife.

* * * * * *

By the language of the Doctor, it was evident that Stephano, in order to cover his villany, and effect his deceit, had perſuaded him the patient was mentally deranged. The ſenſes of Roſolie, indeed, were not at that time very perfect, which ſerved to eſtabliſh this information; and Lucilla had not,

not, when ſhe looked at the menacing eyes of her betrayer, ſufficient courage to attempt to controvert the opinion which had been formed of the intellectual ſtate of her miſtreſs. At length the Doctor and Stephano withdrew; in the evening ſome medicines were adminiſtered to Roſolie, and an old woman was ſent as an aſſiſtant to Lucilla, who was almoſt diſtracted between the anguiſh which ſhe felt for her dying Lady, and the deſpair that aroſe from being deprived of attending me as ſhe had appointed.

Roſolie paſſed a dreadful night, but in the morning ſunk into a ſlumber. Stephano, who was actually now alarmed, had been many times to make enquiries, which he did with ſome appearance of concern, if not of remorſe; and he did not retire to his bed

till ſix o'clock, previous to which he had diſpatched a meſſenger to Salvini.

Lucilla, on finding her gaoler aſleep, ventured into the lower apartments, which, to her grief and vexation, ſhe found all ſecured; but, returning to the chamber, ſhe ſaw the ſtranger in the adjoining garden, when the hope of eſcaping again ſtrengthened; and having attracted the notice of the woman, ſhe motioned her to put one of the little ladders over the wall. This was accordingly done, the deſire having been perfectly and immediately underſtood. My Roſolie was ſtill ſleeping, apparently to riſe no more from her ſlumbers; the faculties of the fatigued nurſe were alſo dormant, and they ſeemed not eaſily to be called into action.

Another moment, and Lucilla thought it would be too late for any enterpriſe; ſhe therefore

therefore dropped from the window, and deſcended to the ground with little injury; ſhe immediately mounted to the top of the ladder, and drew it after her into the garden of her unknown friend, whom ſhe moſt cordially thanked for her humane aſſiſtance. Having been conducted to the ſtreet, ſhe haſtened towards my houſe, where ſhe rapidly ran through the foregoing ſtory, and begged me to fly with her to my dying wife.

* * * * * *

Oh God! what had been my miſdeeds, what my crimes, that ſuch miſeries, ſuch horrors fell on me? Was it, Father, retribution? No! I have too great a ſenſe of thy goodneſs, of thy mercy, and of thy ſupremacy to ſuppoſe that thou wert the director of theſe events, and moſt unnatural occurrences,—let the ſchoolmen, in the intricacies

intricacies and mazes of their reaſonings, ſay what they will to the contrary. I have adored thee often in edifices raiſed by the hands of man, but more often in the temple of the world, which neither art nor induſtry can limit; which is canopied by thy own Heavens, and which thy own ſun by day, and thy myſterious hoſt of ſtars by night beautify beyond what every mine on earth can furniſh, infinitely beyond the poor devices of imitating and preſumptuous man! There have I adored thee; there in wonder, in amazement, and delight, have contemplated thy creation, and moſt truly reverenced thee. But I had not done this, neither could I thus have borne myſelf, if I had beheld thee as the ſcourger of innocence, or as one who, for purpoſes unrevealed, knew of and ſuffered the dreadful deeds wrought by the bloody hands of man,

or thoſe which have been done towards me, to the annihilation of health, of peace, of reaſon—deeds horrible in ſound as the moſt tremendous thunder! more fatal in effect than burſting clouds of burning matter!

* * * * * *

I ſeized the hand of Lucilla, and hurrying her away, deſired that ſhe would be ſwift in conducting me to my wife. The penitent girl obeyed; I ruſhed wildly through the ſtreets with her, and Alberti followed us. Arrived at the houſe, Lucilla knocked gently at the door, and it was opened by the helliſh Stephano, who fled from me, aſtoniſhed and ſhrieking, through the paſſage; but I purſued him, and ſeizing him by the throat, graſped him till he foamed, till his face became as black and

ugly as any of the devils, when he reeled inſenſibly, and fell on the floor.

Aſſigning him to the care of Alberti, I followed Lucilla to the chamber of my wife; I ran up to the bed, threw myſelf upon it, ſaw my Roſolie, pale, ſenſeleſs, dying! I claſped her hand, but it did not return the preſſure; I called her by her name; ſhe neither anſwered nor noticed me. No! Death was on her—his power operated, and all——

But why this method, Roncorone? why ſhould thy mind ſtrive to aſſume a fortitude, when there is a perverſe power within it, whoſe ceſſation from deſpotiſm is but of a momentary date—a period, in order to acquire additional ſtrength, which is meant to effect a perfect triumph?

I did not leave the room all the day; I watched the ſufferer every moment of the night,

night, and at the break of morning ſhe died—ſhe died!

Salvini, I will bring you to an account for this, and to ſuch an account as ſhall not admit prevarication. I will anticipate the retribution of Heaven; I will ſearch your heart, but not with words; a confeſſion ſhall be drawn from you, not by judicial means, but by the force of my own interrogatories. I will do it, villain, barbarian, murderer! by the ſoul of my wife, whoſe body lies at this moment ſtiffening before me, I will do it! In the prolonged agonies of death, when you ſhall coldly ſweat, and writhe, and groan—then, then ſhall be my triumph! You ſhall die, Salvini! you ſhall deſcend, and the eye of intellect ſhall follow your foul and reluctant ſpirit through the noiſy vaults and gleaming paſſages of hell, nor cloſe till you are

puſhed from the fartheſt margin; no, not till it has ſeen you deſcending, headlong and ſcorched, through fathoms of ſmoke, in which the red flames of the ſoul-receiving cauldron beneath ſhall make you partially viſible.

This was my oath.——

——I made it whilſt I ſtood over the body of my murdered wife, whilſt there was warmth in her ſtill quivering fleſh; I made it with a vigour beyond nature, and was carried out of the room by Alberti, who had on that morning cauſed Stephano to be aſſigned over to the officers of juſtice, from whom, however, he eſcaped, though I ſuſpected it was money, and not cunning, that effected his enlargement.

The ſtate of my mind, as well as of my heart, was too deſperate to give an exact and methodical deſcription of. Again my brain.

brain became the receptacle of moſt foul and tormenting images; and Roſolie, ſweet lily early blaſted! being laid in the earth, I prepared myſelf for vengeance.

I provided Lucilla with a ſum of money to enable her to return to her friends, if, after her diſgrace, they were willing to receive her; but the girl's heart was almoſt broken, and all the felicities of her life had fled, never to be recalled. Health and peace had forgotten her, and ſickneſs, grief, and contrition were ever near her; but her complaints to them were not many, becauſe conſcience was ever telling her that her own guilt had firſt conjured them up, and ſolely influenced them in their deſigns and machinations. Nearly a thouſand times, with a deathlike countenance, and with lean imploring hands, did ſhe call on me for forgiveneſs; there had been error in her con-

duct rather than crime, and her appearance ſhewed the ſeverity of the puniſhment that had already been inflicted on her. I therefore trampled her no lower, but raiſed and pardoned her; telling her to refer her ſins, with humility, to the judgment of her God, and alſo to look for mercy in him.

I then clandeſtinely quitted Rome; having previouſly written a letter, ſimilar to the following, to my beſt worldly friend, from whom I contrived to have it kept till I ſhould be at ſome conſiderable diſtance.

"Forgive me, Alberti, and entreat your wife alſo to forgive me, for my ſudden diſappearance. The womb of my mother never harboured you, nor were you in infancy lulled in my cradle; ſtill you have been, and now are my brother. Fraternity

like

like your's was never excelled from the days when the waters of deſtruction ſubſided, till the hour in which I ſaid, ſecretly, 'Farewel, dear partner! God guard your ſteps, however deviating be mine! Farewel, dear partner! beſt and moſt truly loved aſſociate! we ſhall never meet again!"

We never did meet again.

The diſappearance of Stephano made me almoſt mad; I entreated Alberti, in another paper which I left behind me, to offer immediate and large rewards for his apprehenſion; but the villain was too ſucceſsful in his enterpriſe, and I never more heard of him. My principal fear was that he would be with Salvini, and that from him my intended victim would learn his danger before I could bring it near to him. The idea gave me ſtrength; I haſtened towards Venice, and my efforts were ſo great, that

nature almoſt ſunk beneath them. My body was exhauſted, my mind diſtracted; an hundred times in an hour I called on Roſolie. In the morning I fancied that I ſaw her coming with blooming cheeks to meet me; at noon ſhe was beſide me, ſmiling on, embracing me; and at evening I beheld her, white and dejected, pacing ſolemnly under the gloom of every clump or row of trees near which I paſſed.

So much was I the ſlave of a wild imagination, and ſuch were my horrors, ſuch my ideas and chimeras till I arrived at Venice. That place was the theatre of action; my ſinews were braced, my heart ſteeled; the hand of deſperation ſeemed to take the guidance of me, and the ſpirit of my wife to cry from the temples of religion, from the regions of air, and from the waves of the Adriatic, "Vengeance! vengeance!"

In

In going to the houſe of Salvini, which I did almoſt as ſoon as I entered the city, I had to paſs the place in which the remains of my uncle reſted; the doors of the church being open, I went into it, ſought the aiſle in which I had erected his monument, and kiſſed the tablet that recorded ſome few of his modeſt virtues. Reverence, however, could not long detain me; I returned through the ranks of thoſe who were devotionally employed; and ſeeing that I attracted the particular notice of many of them, who roſe from their knees to gaze on me, I folded my arms, and laying my agitated face upon them, in that manner paſſed the doors, and again entered into the ſtreet, which being greatly crowded, the concerns of the buſy people allowed them no time to trouble themſelves, or enquire into mine.

In a few minutes afterwards I was at Salvini's houſe: I knocked at the door, and a ſervant appearing, I enquired for his maſter; but learned from him that my enemy was not at Venice, though the lacquey pretended ignorance as to the place of his reſidence. From one of Alberti's Venetian friends, however, I learned that Salvini was at Mantua, to which place it was my intention to follow him immediately.

I remained only one day in Venice. Keeping myſelf as private as poſſible, I was not noticed by many, and to thoſe few who recognized and addreſſed me, I did not make known the ſorrows of my heart, or the diſtractions of my mind; neither did I aſk for their pity, nor correct the erroneous information that had been given them of my unhappy ſtory. I no longer looked for ſympathy, becauſe I was no longer weak; I had

had no tears in my eyes, no ſickneſs in my heart; the active ſpirits of revenge hurried me on, and the rapidity of my pulſes was almoſt incredible. To ſpeak ſtill more forcibly, my ſtate might be compared to that of a lion, which, having been attacked by an enemy, goes forth with his cheſt full of ire, and with menacing eyes, to ſeek for the blood which can alone appeaſe him.

With the ſame ſpeed that I had travelled from Rome to Venice, I continued my purſuit from the latter place to Mantua; but after my fatigue, my vexations, and my pains, I had to learn that I arrived a day too late for the completion of my purpoſe, as the execrable Salvini had departed on the preceding one from Mantua.

This was a blow of which at firſt I was greatly ſuſceptible; for I began to fear that the fiend would elude my vengeance, and

alſo that Stephano had exceeded me in ſwiftneſs, and cauſed the removal of his employer. Still my diſappointment did not wholly diſcourage me; but learning nothing of Salvini's departure that was ſatisfactory, I apprehended that I ſhould not ſoon meet with him. My ſtrict enquiries brought me intelligence that he had been viſiting a Nobleman, whoſe name I have now forgotten, and that his diſappearance was abrupt: all beyond this was myſterious.

Two days afterwards, however, aided by diſſimulation, I learned from a ſervant of Salvini's hoſt, that poſt-horſes had been procured to carry him towards Milan; and that he had, ſome few hours previous to the commencement of his journey, received letters which ſeemed greatly to agitate him.

"He

"He has not eſcaped then!" I exclaimed; "my ſnare is yet open, and I ſtill ſhall take him in it."—I clapped ſome money into my director's hand, and in leſs than an hour was leaving Mantua behind me; the tumult of my heart affected my breath, and on receiving the intelligence of this man, my emotions almoſt entirely ſuppreſſed it.

I paid my drivers liberally, and urged them on with increaſing impatience; my ſoul ſeemed to fly before me; at every poſt, not thinking of expences, I ſelected the beſt horſes, and the night as well as the day were ſpent in travelling. It was dark when I entered Milan; and in the morning I again began my ſearch, when an hundred additional troubles and perplexities aroſe; but I ſurmounted them, diſperſed, put them all to flight, completely conquered them.

If

If a man would ſucceed in a project, let him perſevere; if he would gain the aſſiſtance of his brethren, let him ſcatter his gold among them. Thoſe who are urged to do an act of ſervice, for which friendſhip and gratitude are to be the mere rewards, will ſhake their heads, and anſwer, "*We have no power*;" but feed their venality, and it will be, "*Good Signor, command us.*"

I had been a week in Milan, and made no diſcovery; on the eighth day, however, as I was paſſing a public market, I ſaw a man purchaſing ſome poultry, and his face was not unknown to me: I knew him to be, or that he had been, a ſervant to Salvini. After a moment's recollection, I was aſſured that he was one of the two fellows that had accompanied my deteſtable enemy to his houſe, from which I had reſcued my Roſolie.

—reſcued, only more fatally, more horribly to loſe her!

Thinking it probable that I was now on the eve of a full elucidation of circumſtances, again my deſpondency was ſucceeded by the more violent paſſions; but I reſolved to direct my eyes wholly towards the man, and narrowly to watch his motions. I ſaw him place the fowls in his baſket, and pay the poulterer for them; he then walked away, and, at ſome diſtance, and much agitated, I followed him.

On quitting Rome I had, for the forwarding of my project, made ſome alterations in my uſual manner of dreſſing; and afterwards, when I left Venice, my habit underwent a greater change: and I did not doubt but that it diſguiſed my perſon, without attaching to it any ſingularity or appearance of affectation.

I drew

I drew my hat over my eyes, and purſued the object of my ſuſpicion and curioſity, not only through the city, but alſo three or four miles beyond it. I was cautious in not ſeeming to notice him, and aſſumed an air of inattention to things which were around me, by carrying a book in my hand, and frequently looking at it. At length he turned out of the road, and entered a narrow and pleaſant lane; I did the ſame with apparent indifference, and watched him into a ſmall houſe or cottage that ſtood in a little adjacent meadow. I was at firſt prompted to ruſh forward, and break open the door which he had cloſed; but caution whiſpered that ſuch an attempt would be abſurd: and in order that I might not excite ſuſpicion, I walked further down the lane, and at ſome conſiderable diſtance ſaw another ſmall, but ſomewhat meaner houſe,

houſe, where I thought I might venture a few enquiries.

I therefore walked up to it, at the ſame time hiding my emotions as much as poſſible, though I felt the fluſh of paſſion on my cheek, and knew that I had no direct power of changing or diſcolouring the growing hues. I took my hat from my head, as if I were ſeeking refreſhment from the air, and proceeded with an appearance of extreme fatigue and laſſitude.

A young woman was ſitting on a ſtool at the door, and I aſked her for ſomething cooling to refreſh me;—ſhe brought me fruit and ice; and after I had taken ſome of them, and made her a recompence, I ſtarted a few ſimple queſtions reſpecting the country, and afterwards others which related, though not particularly, to the inhabitants

inhabitants of the cottage that I had firſt noticed.

To the firſt enquiries ſhe uſed a great deal of circumlocution, which I could well have diſpenſed with; and to the laſt ſhe could ſay but little. That little, however, rouſed me, and I drew ſtill nearer to her, in order that my ear might take in every word as it paſſed from her.

"In that cottage, Signor," ſhe replied, "lives a gentleman, who came to it ſcarcely more than a week ago."

"Indeed! ſo lately?"

"A day or two under or over, Signor. To thoſe who love quiet it muſt be a pleaſant place; I hope the ſtranger will find it ſuch—with all my heart I wiſh it!"

"What is his name?" I enquired.

"I never heard it: I told you, Signor, that he was a ſtranger to me."

"Excuſe

"Excuſe me; I forgot it. Does he live alone? Has he any ſociety?"

"He keeps a ſervant."

"Can you deſcribe his perſon?"

"Of the ſervant, Signor?"

"No, of the maſter. I have a ſmall curioſity; I think it is probable I ſhall know him.

"Why, as to deſcribing him—I have ſeen him only twice, and even at thoſe times not very perfectly; but I think he is a handſome, terrifying man. If ever a woman ſhould love him, I am ſure, very ſure that ſhe muſt likewiſe fear him.

"It is Salvini," I ſaid incautiouſly, but ſomewhat indiſtinctly.

"What did you ſay?" enquired the girl.

"Nothing—only that your deſcription is whimſical, and makes me laugh."

"I proteſt

"I proteſt here comes the ſtranger now," ſaid the cottager, riſing from her ſtool.

"Where? where?" I exclaimed, while ſcorpions ſeemed to ſpring from my heart.

"Nay, now it is my turn to laugh at you, Signor. There, he is now coming from behind the large tree yonder; when he approaches, pray look at his dark viſage and ſullen brows."

"Not I," I replied; "I want not to ſee him."

"Whither is your curioſity gone, Signor?" ſaid the girl, with more mirth than ſuſpicion.

"I had none," I anſwered; "I was only ſporting with you. With your leave I will ſtep into your cottage, and reſt myſelf awhile."

"Do ſo," ſhe ſaid; "I muſt, however, have another peep at the ſtranger; when he

he is gone by, I will come and diſpoſe my mother's couch for you."

I ſtepped haſtily into the cottage, and putting aſide a ſmall part of the window curtain, panting and agitated, watched for the ſtranger. I ſaw him at the diſtance of ſeveral yards, and inſtantly knew him to be Salvini. I looked at the villain's face: it was dark and contracted; and though his eyes fell on the cottager, who was young and blooming, their fires were not ſoftened.

My veins in a moment were ſwelling, and in the ſucceeding one my blood was curdled. I was ſtarting forward to purſue and ſtab him; but my ſinews relaxed, my legs failed me, and my head fell with violence upon a table that ſtood by my ſide.

The cottager at that inſtant entered, and looking earneſtly at me, enquired whether I was not well; to which I anſwered that I believed

believed I had been ſomewhat incautious in eating ſo much of her fruit and ice when the temperature of my body was ſo hot and moiſt. In order to prevent any ill effects ariſing, my kind young hoſteſs offered me a cordial, and preſſed it upon me with ſo much kindneſs and force of recommendation, that I could not decline it.

In a few minutes after I declared myſelf much recovered, at the ſame time attributing, as ſhe did, the favourable change to the virtues of the draught ſhe had given me. I did not offer her any reward, but ſlipped a ſmall purſe, without her perceiving it, into the glaſs which I had uſed; when putting it aſide, I bade my lively little friend adieu, and departed from the cottage.

The free air ſomewhat revived me; and having walked a little diſtance, I ſtopped,

in

in order to think of my plans and means of operation.

What ſhould I do reſpecting Salvini? Give him up to the law? Was it certain that he would ſuffer by it? Neither fine nor impriſonment were in a thouſandth degree adequate to his villany.—Meet him arm to arm, breaſt to breaſt? What, place myſelf in equal terms before the raviſher of my wife? before her murderer? perhaps to fall the victim of chance, and conſequently add to his former brutal triumph? No, no! Should I ſhoot him, ſtab him? Yes, yes! To remove ſuch a monſter would not be a mere gratification of my revenge and awakened paſſions; but it would alſo be to benefit ſociety, and take off a moſt vile and corruptive blot from human nature, which would look the fairer for the action.

I determined,

I determined, vowed, moſt ſolemnly ſwore that, within the ſpace of a few hours, he ſhould die by my hand—by the hand of the huſband of Roſolie.—Angel! I thought I heard your ſoft voice in the clouds approving my oath; I even looked up for you towards Heaven, but my eyes, having ſtrained themſelves in diſappointment, only fell on the paths which had been ſo lately trodden by your deſtroyer. "Retribution is near, ſpirit!" I cried—"retribution is at hand! You will hear of it above; it will be rumoured by the ſhuddering Saints, and I ſhall ſoon be with you to announce it!"

I returned to Milan, and purchaſed at one ſhop a brace of piſtols, ſome powder, and balls; and at another place I provided myſelf with a ſtiletto, as I had not fully determined which of the two inſtruments I ſhould uſe in the diſpatching of my enemy.

enemy. I wiſhed not to be ingeniouſly ſanguinary, though I could not abate him an atom of my vengeance. Putting my new purchaſes into my pocket, I again left the city, and journeying back to the village, loitered about till ſome conſiderable time after ſunſet.

I afterwards approached the cottage of Salvini; but ſeeing the ſervant employed in the little garden, I again retired ſome diſtance from the premiſes, without attracting his notice, or drawing his attention from his work. It was my deſign to make a deliberate ſacrifice, and therefore I wiſhed not to enter into any engagement or conteſt; on that night I firmly reſolved to cleanſe Salvini's body of his foul ſpirit, however hazardous the attempt might be, and whoever witneſſed my actions, or had the temerity to oppoſe them. Fidelity,

perhaps, might bind the ſervant to the maſter; but that I conſidered as no obſtacle, even ſhould they not be apart from each other when I ruſhed forward to ſeize my prey. The powers of reſolution were great within me; the ſtrength of many men ſeemed at that hour to be at my command; and I had not a doubt but that one of my arms would be able to ſhoot or to ſtab Salvini, while the other graſped his menial, and kept him at its full length from me. Had it been poſſible for them both to have aſſumed the forms of lions, I ſhould not have feared, in that hour of inſpiration, their ſhaggy paws, or been put to flight by their united roarings.

My mind was firm; I felt not the compunctions of horror; I did not view myſelf as a deſigning murderer, neither did I tremble when I caſt up my eyes to the realms of the

the Supreme Spirit, whoſe ken is ſaid to be illimitable. Never had a malefactor, doomed by the violated laws of his country to expire in public beneath the inſtruments of torture, committed crimes more atrocious—crimes, which the ear of humanity would turn from, and the ſoul ſicken at!

I again went towards the cottage, and when I was within a few yards of it, ſaw Salvini and his ſervant ſtanding at the door: they had been, and were ſtill converſing together.

"That you can do," ſaid the former, alluding to ſomething which had preceded—"that you can do in the morning when you go to Milan; and I would not have you forget to bring with you the opiates; tell the apothecary to make them more powerful, for his others were weak, and had no effect."

"Ah, ha!" I cried, or rather ſtrongly thought, "is it ſo? I have the means to quiet you and your compunctions, and will apply them too."

"And tell him," Salvini continued, "that, during the night, a fever preys ſtrongly on me, and that I wiſh him to ſend——no, tell him to come to me in the courſe of a day or two. You may deſire that he will return with you on the morrow."

"Yes, Signor, I ſhall be back at noon."

"That is ſufficient; open the window of my chamber; I ſhall walk awhile, and return about eleven."

"What will you take for ſupper, Signor?" enquired the man.

"Any thing—nothing—I ſhall not eat to-night."

"Nor

"Nor to-morrow night, nor at any time hereafter," ſaid I, mentally.

Salvini walked into the garden; I heard him ſigh, as if he were much oppreſſed. He entered a little arbour, but ſtaid in it ſcarcely a minute; he then plucked a roſe from a tree that grew very near the hedge behind which I had concealed myſelf; he ſmelt of the flower, gazed on it earneſtly, and ſighing ſtill more heavily, threw it from him.

He ſurely at that moment thought of Roſolié, of the bloſſom that opened and flouriſhed under his eye, the ſweet roſe which he ſhould have tenderly nouriſhed and foſtered, but which he rifled, withered, blaſted!

"And blaſted be thee, thou falſe friend, thou cruel guardian, thou moſt abandoned villain!"

I did not then ſhoot him; but ſeeing him paſs the gate, I moved from my hiding-place, and followed him at a diſtance. I felt for my ſtiletto, which was in my boſom, and placed it in ſuch a manner that an inſtant might not be loſt in drawing it from the ſcabbard; my piſtols were in my pocket, their barrels well filled with powder and balls; every thing was ready for my purpoſe.

Night never was more beautiful; the ſcattered lamps of Heaven burnt clear; the hills, the meadows, and the trees were ſilvered; and the ſhadow of Salvini fell a great length on the ground, and ſerved me as a guide.——

" Look around, wretch, and the beauties of nature, perhaps, may give you a momentary pleaſure; look up, murderer, and wonder at the magnificence of God! of him,

him, into whoſe regions you ſhall never enter; of him, whoſe eye ſhall be as lightning to you! Confeſs yourſelf, tremble, ſue for mercy, that, if forbidden to claim one of the joys of Heaven, you may not be driven into the caverns of hell! Pray, if it avail you nothing, pray! You ſee the moon ſhedding a world of light; you ſhall not ſee it to-morrow riſe over the hills! You hear the bird of night pouring forth its melody, and ſending its clear notes through the vales of innocence; ſome few ſtrains more, and then your ears ſhall ſhut out all ſound for ever! The ſpirits of the elements are blowing ſweetly in your face; but within an hour they ſhall paſs over your breathleſs and unconſcious body! The gulph of oblivion is yawning, and the ſinews of my arm are ſwelling to hurl you into it!"

He ſtill continued to walk, and I to follow. He had gone nearly a mile from his houſe, when he entered a ſmall grove, or clump of trees. The moment was come! I haſtened my ſteps, placed myſelf before him, and bound my fingers like curves of iron round his arm.

He haſtily enquired who I was.

"Roncorone!" I replied—"Roncorone!"

"Oh Heaven!" he exclaimed, and endeavoured, but in vain, to free himſelf from my violent graſp.

"Salvini," I ſaid, "uſe no efforts to releaſe yourſelf; did you poſſeſs treble ſtrength, my arms ſhould ſtill hold you. Struggle not; I came hither not to be baffled, but to——"

"To do what?" ſaid the guilty wretch, faltering and trembling almoſt to annihilation.

"To

"To give you a paſſport to the world which is at preſent unknown to you; to make a ſpeedy diviſion between your ſoul and body."

"To kill me! to murder me!"

"To ſacrifice you! Such is my intention—ſuch the purpoſe that brought me hither."

He again attempted to releaſe himſelf, but I drew forth one of my piſtols and placing it near his head, he ſtruggled no more. He however became deſpicably abject; and, throwing himſelf on his knees, begged for mercy.

"What!" I exclaimed, "mercy from *me?* mercy from the huſband of Roſolie? Villain! that name has rouſed me. Deteſted fiend! can you expect mercy from me? Dare you look for it from God? But here, before this inſtrument levels you, con-

feſs yourſelf; if words will procure you pardon, ſpeak them; however, be brief, for all your faculties will end in the ſpace of ten minutes. Confeſs——"

"What, what ſhould I confeſs?"

"That your heart has long been the receptacle of vice; that your paſt deeds have been horrible enough to doom you to hell; that you are a murderer—a raviſher! Confeſs, confeſs!"

"I will not; who can thus arraign me?"

"Were my father living, he could do it; and would not the deceaſed and miſtaken Venzone join his evidence? Stephano, that dark and cruel devil, reſembling yourſelf, could ſpeak to it—Lucilla—my wife, my wife, fiend! all could accuſe you. Have I ſtruck you dumb? Speak inſtantly, or my fury may even ſpurn at a momentary reſtraint!"

"Hear

"Hear me," he cried—"hear me, Roncorone! My actions indeed have not been juſt, but they have been greatly exaggerated. Stephano was a raſcal, Lucilla a bawd, and their evidence therefore ought not to convict me. Your wife, had ſhe lived, I ſhould have reſtored to you."

"Filthy villain! what, ſtained, deflowered?"

"By whom? Not by me. Roncorone, your ear has been groſſly abuſed by lies."

"And is at this moment. Confeſs—you ſet my houſe on fire?"

"I did. Pardon, pardon me for it!"

"You impoſed on my wife with falſehood, ſeized her, carried her to Rome."

"It is true. I beſeech you forgive me!"

"And there you raviſhed her!"

"Oh, no, no!"

"You did, monster! You forced her, compelled her; you placed a foil on her innocence, marked her with pollution, brought death upon her!"

"No, indeed, indeed——"

"Liar! hell demands you of me!"

I threw him on his back, and having grappled with him for a moment, diſcharged the contents of one of my piſtols into his head. It was not wholly effectual, for he afterwards murmured—"I am guilty! I am guilty!" when I placed the barrel of the other inſtrument to his mouth, and ſcattered his brains.

I threw the piſtols from me, and they fell into a pool of water near the ſpot which was marked with the blood of Salvini; my ſtiletto followed them, for I had no more death-deeds to perform. My work accompliſhed, and my deſigns effected, I removed

removed the ſtains from my hands, and leaving the grove, took the road leading to Milan. I however loitered about the ſuburbs of the city, and did not enter it till the morning, when I returned to my lodging, apparently tranquil, though internally agitated.

* * * * * *

I ſat down, alone and undiſturbed, to think on what had paſſed. I did not ſhrink from my actions; I would not, had I poſſeſſed the power, have given Salvini his life again; and when I reflected on his death, I murmured, "Such be the end of every atrocious villain like himſelf!"

Oh, what ideas followed next! But for him, happineſs and bliſs had ſtill been mine! but for him, I had been an huſband, ever receiving from my ſoft partner love, tenderneſs, ecſtacy! nay, perhaps, but for his—

his—Oh God!—but for his violation, I had been a father, liſtening to the plaints of my babe, or fondly gazing on its little face of ſmiling innocence! Ah! wretched and moſt miſerable Roncorone!

* * * * * *

I left Milan on the following day, and before any rumours had gone forth reſpecting the tranſaction in which I had been concerned. My intention was, as it had been before the diſcovery of my wife at Rome, and when I was bewailing her ſuppoſed death, to ſeclude myſelf from the world, to ſeek ſome ſpot where the inhabitants were few, and where the malice, cunning, and duplicity of the thicker ſwarm were not to be traced. I wiſhed to find a place of quiet, where my tired ſpirit might ſink into its long ſleep, untainted by loquacity, and unmoleſted by thoſe effuſions which coſt worldly

worldly ſenſibility only a ſhort breathing, common as the air, but diſpenſing none of its benefits.

In paſt viſionary moments I had regarded the world as a noble temple, canopied with beautiful architecture, and tenanted by minor Gods! Wherever I then turned, I beheld, or fancied I beheld, Virtue and Charity employed in their deeds of goodneſs, Mercy ſtretching forth her hands, and Truth ſmiling brighter than the ſun, which ſhe could look at unblinking; Science receiving reward, Genius unexacted admiration, and Philanthropy—benign Philanthropy! giving ſmiles to the faces of thouſands, pleaſure to the hearts of millions! Oh, how beautiful was every thing to the eye! how heavenly every thing to the imagination!

But the optics are only the intelligencers to the ſoul, to that emporium in which the ingredients

ingredients of our paſſions, of our affections, and of our antipathies are indiſcriminately placed, in order to be modelled by worldly occurrences. The world—that world which once had ſo charmed and raviſhed me, now appeared no more than a mortifying ſpectacle, darkened in ſome parts by the general frailties of man, in others enſanguined by his crimes, but in none irradiated by his virtues. My former opinions being again conſidered, were found to ariſe from infatuation; but I confeſs when I diſcovered how far I had gone aſtray, I ſighed at the neceſſity of retracting. There is ſomething even to regret and mourn for when we are recalled from pleaſing deceptions by painful and melancholy truths; we wiſh almoſt to be lulled into them again, when the powers that rouſed us offer no real for the artificial good. Cold Philoſophy will ſpurn at this,

becauſe ſhe teaches that truth is always good, always excellent.

My affairs were few, and eaſily to be arranged; I poſted back to Venice, where, in privacy, I ſettled them all preparatory to my renunciation of ſociety. I diſcovered myſelf only to my agent, who was rewarded for his ſecrecy; he collected my property, and having reſerved a ſufficient ſum for the poor neceſſities of my few coming days, or years, as it might be, I aſſigned the remainder by a writing to my friend Alberti, and charged him only with the guardianſhip of a young orphan, a little boy, whom I had ſnatched from the ſtorms of adverſity, and the fangs of poverty; and whoſe innocent tongue uſed, every time I ſaw him, to ſay, "Heaven bleſs Signor Roncorone!"—"Endeavour to make your charge an honeſt and worthy man," I ſaid in the paper which I addreſſed

I addreſſed to Alberti; "I hope he will be riſing to manhood with promiſe, and you declining into age with tranquillity, when the planks of my coffin, if any man ſhall provide me with one, will be rotten, and diſjoined by the creatures of the earth. The boy has too many ſenſibilities—blunt the edges of ſome of them; ſtupidity enſures happineſs better than exceſs of feeling."

I appropriated a ſum of money for a monument to be erected to the memory of my wife; and in a letter entreated Alberti to attend perſonally to the performance of this buſineſs.

Oh ſpirit of peace! no epitaph could do thee juſtice! the ſons of Art could never raiſe a monument ſo durable as that which was contained in the ſoul of thy diſtracted huſband. The one muſt neceſſarily yield to time and to the ſway of years; but the other

other not prolonged centuries, nor elemental blaſts, nor the laſt great convulſions of nature could throw down, or in any manner efface. God! at that moment I felt thy magnitude; and the expanſion of thy power enraptured me while I, trembling, gazed upon thy bright dominions!

It was a pain to part from my little *protegé*; he aſked me why I ſighed, why my cheeks were ſo pale, why I had not ſeen him for ſo long a time, and where the dear Signora; meaning my wife, then was; and when I kiſſed him, and told him I was going, he claſped my neck, and ſobbed out, "God bleſs you, Signor! when will you again come back to Ferdinand?"—The boy's words found the chords of my ſenſibility, and played exquiſitely upon them. I fondled him till he fell aſleep in my arms, when I laid him gently on a couch, and

kiſſing

kiſſing his red lips, gave him a laſt look, and left him for ever.

After a private reſidence in Venice of a fortnight, I departed from thence, in order to carry my debilitated body and ruined mind to Switzerland; in which country I meant to dwell as long as local habitation was of any conſideration to me. Having formed the deſign of making a voyage, I embarked at Venice, and afterwards entered the mouth of the Po, it being my intention to go up that river as far as Cremona, for the fatigue of travelling was at that time too great for me.

The beauties of Nature no longer could faſcinate or even pleaſe my eye; it was dead to them, though the time had been when it would have ſtretched with enthuſiaſm. I was not charmed by the undulation of the waves, or by the rich and varied

proſpects

proſpects on the banks of the river; nor could the evening chantings of the mariners, nor the more lively ſtrains of the peaſants, which came from the oppoſite ſhores, give me the moſt tranſitory ſenſation of pleaſure, or purge my imagination of the foulneſs that hung over it like a fog. My powers were decaying; the faculties, which ſolely conſtitute the riches of life, and without which not even the airs of Heaven ſeem worth inhaling, were falling languidly and ſeparating in ſickneſs, and I made no effort either to recal or recollect them.

I did not diſembark at Cremona, as I had intended, but ſailed to Pavia, where I landed, and from whence I deſigned to depart on the following day.

The next morning, however, I found myſelf unable to proceed; my indiſpoſition increaſed

increaſed moſt rapidly, and my giddineſs was ſo great, that even motionleſs things ſeemed to move fantaſtically before my eyes. I thought I was dying; and in that thought there was pleaſure, otherwiſe a conſiderable degree of ſatisfaction.—"The moment is nearly come!" I cried; "I am about to aſſociate with angels—to open my eyes on all the grandeur and myſteries of the univerſal God!"—I ſmiled in my ſickneſs, and was as unruffled by fear as I had ever been in the calmeſt hour of infancy.

I was, however, deceived in my expectations; for the time of perpetual ſilence was not yet at hand. I had not been in Pavia more than ſix or ſeven days when the vertigo ceaſed, and health again ſtrove to effect an eſtabliſhment.

But my plagues and miſeries ended not here; Fate was planning moſt craftily for me,

me, and preparing a damnable web to catch me in.

I had not been out of my inn ſince my debarkation, but my hoſt and his family had been very attentive and tender to me, and they expreſſed much pleaſure on my recovery; I felt the kindneſs of theſe people—very ſenſibly felt it, though I could have wiſhed never to hear ſuch congratulations. They were one day ſpeaking of an execution that was to take place at Milan on the next day; and being preſent, and ſeeing that the ſubject created much intereſt among them, I enquired the nature of the offence, and was told it was that of murder.

"The name of the culprit," continued my landlord, "is Luzzi; he was in the ſervice of Signor Salvini, whom he murdered ſome little time ago; for which crime, and

an

an horrid one it was, he is to-morrow to die on the wheel."

"God!"

"Signor?"

"What proofs were there of his guilt?"

"Oh, moſt convincing proofs! evident, palpable! ſuch as the ſhallow cunning of the wretch could not ſhift from the eyes of the world and juſtice."

"Indeed, indeed! Pray what were they?"

"Why Signor Salvini lived in retirement; he had been but a ſhort time in that part of the country; he was found murdered at ſome little diſtance from his dwelling, and many articles of conſiderable value were afterwards diſcovered in the boxes of the villain, who had not fled before the alarm was given, and who, on being apprehended, freely acknowledged the theft, but moſt obſtinately denied the murder."

"Oh!

"Oh! and is there no other evidence againſt him?"

"No other, Signor;—ſurely this is ſufficient."

"And he is to die?"

"The rack ends him to-morrow."

In one moment I felt the pangs of a thouſand dying men, and, ſinking into a chair, ſat ſome conſiderable time in a ſtupor; at length, recollecting myſelf, I ordered that poſt-horſes might be immediately prepared to take me to Milan.

My agitation, I perceived, aſtoniſhed my hoſt, who was deſirous of aſking me ſome queſtions concerning the cauſe of it; but I ſilenced him, and afterwards ſent him to look after the conveyance that I had ordered, and into which, in the courſe of half an hour, I threw myſelf, in order to be driven from Pavia. My drivers aſſured me that I

ſhould be in Milan ſoon after ſunſet; but owing to an injury done to the vehicle, and to the wretched ſtate of the horſes, it was near ten o'clock when I reached that city, and I could therefore enter into no part of my buſineſs till the morning.

My firſt enquiry was at what time the execution would take place on the morrow; and being informed that the criminal would be brought forth at the hour of ten, I retired to my chamber, though my limbs almoſt refuſed to perform their accuſtomed offices.

I diſmiſſed the perſon who attended me to my ſleeping-room, without ordering, or even thinking of any refreſhment for myſelf. I placed the lamp on a table, and threw my hands upon my heated forehead. A large mirror was in the front of me; my eyes glanced upon it, but I withdrew them in terror,

terror, as the glaſs ſeemed to caſt upon me the pale manacled victim, the grim, unpitying executioners, and all the dreadful apparatus of the limb-tearing wheel. I altered my poſition, but even then I could not baniſh the appalling figures of imagination.

My thoughts were growing wild. The danger of the priſoner,—the horror of ſuch a puniſhment falling on the innocent,—the knowledge of a man's mind, when his ſituation is deſperate, ſuggeſting deſperate means of extricating himſelf,—ſuicide how often preferred, if the neceſſary aids are within reach, to a public, prolonged, and excruciating death! Theſe were the ſubjects, the dreadful ſubjects which were inceſſantly ſhifting in my mind.

The time till the morning ſeemed almoſt half a century, and I thought light more

tardy than uſual. In the interim, however, I had formed my principal deſign, which was to reſcue the condemned man by a confeſſion of my own guilt, which could alone preſerve him, and alſo to throw myſelf upon the laws, the ſeverity of which I did not fear, and the mercy of which I reſolved not to court.

To preſerve ſo wretched a life as mine, ſo burthened an exiſtence,—to keep in action ſenſes which ſtirred not at the call of happineſs, and ſtill were never reſting, ſhould I, *could* I ſuffer innocence to writhe under the torture, after hearing the curſes of the unfeeling multitude aſſembled to gape upon the agonies of one of the Almighty's creatures?

He might have a wife; ſhould I ſend her into the world diſtracted? He might be a father; God of the univerſe! ſhould I cauſe the throats of his babes to ſcream, their

their innocent boſoms to heave convulſively, their poor, poor eyes to overflow, and their guileleſs tongues to ſay to each other—" Our father is butchered! his veins are emptied, his limbs bruiſed, broken, and diſjointed! let us weep, ſiſters,—let us mourn, brothers, for our parent is cruelly torn from us for ever!"

Had I for a moment harboured ſuch a deſign, I ſhould have wiſhed that never thereafter the ears of Heaven would be, *even for a moment*, inclined to my ſupplications.

I was in the ſtreets ſoon after the hour of ſeven; there were then nearly three hours to paſs before that which had been appointed for the execution, and conſequently ſufficient time for me to go before an officer of juſtice, or a magiſtrate, and to make a confeſſion of thoſe actions which it

was now horrid, inhuman, and even deviliſh to conceal.

I ſtopped not to ponder on my deſigns, but hurried through the ſtreets till I arrived at the houſe of a magiſtrate, to whom I had been directed. He was not riſen. Anxious to ſee and ſpeak to him, I entreated a ſervant (making my requeſt more forcible by the application of a piece of money) to go up to his chamber, and inform him that a perſon was waiting to make a very important diſcovery, which, if not immediately attended to, would be productive of the moſt dreadful conſequences that could poſſibly be conceived.

I believe the man ſuſpected that my intellects were impaired. After looking at me a ſhort time, and putting my preſent into his pocket, he however went up with my meſſage, and in about ten minutes returned

turned and acquainted me that his maſter would attend me as ſoon as he could put on his clothes.

I was well ſatisfied with the anſwer, I endeavoured to collect myſelf againſt the appearance of the magiſtrate, and to make my ſelf-accuſations with firmneſs: but my mind recurred to the ſhocking ſituation of the condemned priſoner, and my agitation again became violent.

The perſon for whom I was waiting, now entered the room, and viewing me very attentively, enquired my early buſineſs.

"I have a ſerious charge to make," I replied—"a very ſerious, and I doubt not but that you will ſay a very dreadful charge."

"Againſt whom?"

"Myſelf—my accuſation goes no further; I am come to ſtate my own deeds to you."

" Then I dare believe your criminality is not great."

" Dare *not* believe it; you are deceived; it is perhaps of ſuch a nature as will ſhew me of a devil's colour to your eyes."

" Extraordinary! proceed, Signor."

" There is a man doomed to the wheel this morning."

" I know it."

Doomed for murder."

" True; he is to give his own blood for that which he ſpilt."

" Touch not a limb of him—not a ſingle limb! let not the hand of the executioner even go near to him. The crime of which he is accuſed, for which he is condemned to ſuffer, he is as innocent of as the pureſt of the ſaints were of the crucifixion of Chriſt! Hear me, attend to me—*he is* not, but *I am* the murderer."

" The

"The murderer of Salvini?"

"Yes, of Salvini. Theſe hands, ſpotleſs as they now appear, brought death on him, gave him his laſt paſſport, and ſent him to hell, his fitteſt reſidence. But pardon me—I talk rudely."

"Do you talk *truly*, Signor?"

"Do you believe in God? in the Son of the Holy Virgin?"

"Moſt firmly!" replied the magiſtrate, raiſing his croſs—"moſt devoutly!"

"So do I; and as truly as I believe in them, ſo truly am I the murderer of Salvini. Haſten to the priſon, releaſe the culprit; and place me in his dungeon. I heard not of his ſituation till yeſterday; had I been acquainted with his captivity as ſoon as it commenced, I ſwear he ſhould not have pined a ſingle day. Be quick, be quick, or it may be too late!"

"It is, I fear, *now* too late; the confeſſion ſhould, I apprehend, have been made before, if it were really deſigned to avert the puniſhment of the ſuppoſed criminal."

"Why—why? The hour fixed for his death is that of ten, is it not?"

"It was afterwards altered. He ſuffers at eight; your ſelf-accuſation therefore is undoubtedly too late to ſave the priſoner."

My blood becoming inſtantly cold, I ſhivered as if the different members of my body were parting.

"Murder!" I exclaimed; "follow me to the ſcaffold! follow me inſtantly! I ſhall be damned indeed if Luzzi has ſuffered! I would not bring death on him to be ſovereign of the world!"

I ran out of the houſe, and though little acquainted with the city, had to make no enquiries reſpecting the place of death, as I ſaw

I ſaw many people haſtening towards it. I was the ſwifteſt of the ſwift, and it was not long before I arrived at the murderous ſpot.

The crowd was immenſe, the dreadful apparatus prepared, the convict partly bound on the wheel, and a tormenting prieſt ſtood preaching in the language of damnation, in order to extort a confeſſion of crimes of which the poor wretch was not guilty. I could not get near to the ſcaffold, but I called out loudly and repeatedly, "Kill not the innocent! kill not the innocent!" when my words or my geſtures raiſed the mirth of the hardened bye-ſtanders; many of whom indulged themſelves with burſts of laughter, and with expreſſions ſo groſs, ſhocking, and inapplicable, that they irritated and diſguſted me.

I removed to ſome little diſtance, repeating with more force and exertion the ſame words; but they had not any greater effect. At that moment I heard a dreadful ſhriek from the victim, a thouſand ſobs and murmurs from the ſpectators. This was too mighty a blow for me; I was growing mad.

"Stop the execution!" I vociferated; "I have a pardon!"

"Pardon! pardon! pardon!" reſounded through the crowd. I took advantage of their credulity, and holding up a folded paper, the people joyfully gave way, and made a paſſage for me to the ſcaffold. I eagerly mounted the ladder that was placed againſt it, and threw myſelf on the wheel; but hearing a deeper groan than any that had before reached me, and ſeeing blood running on the planks, my eyes ſhut themſelves

ſelves up in horror and grief, and my ſenſes were inſtantly and entirely ſuſpended. Before they again became active, I was removed from the ſcaffold, and afterwards I found myſelf in a room ſurrounded by ſeveral perſons. The magiſtrate to whom I had applied, and who had followed me from his houſe with all poſſible ſpeed, as I had directed, was among them, and to him I firſt addreſſed myſelf.

My earlieſt queſtion was concerning the tortured, and my eyes filled with the tears of pleaſure and of humanity when I was informed that the ſentence, owing to my very ſtrange and unprecedented confeſſion, had no further fallen on him than by breaking one of his arms. That, indeed, was a ſhocking injury, but I was glad not to hear it aggravated.

On

On being aſked whether I ſtill perſiſted in my recent acknowledgment, I deſired a ſolemn oath to be adminiſtered to me; which being done, I again ſaid that I was the murderer of Salvini, and the only perſon employed in the tranſaction. I deſcribed the ſpot, the hour, and, recollecting myſelf, ſpoke of the water in which I had thrown the piſtols and ſtiletto. If this evidence were not ſufficient, I referred them to my hoſt at Milan, who could ſpeak of my abſence on that particular night, and alſo to the cottager, who had ſeen me near the place of action ſome few hours before I had ſhot Salvini.

On being aſked the cauſe of my deeds, for a ſhort time I remained ſilent; at length, however, I told my examiner that my motives ſhould not be revealed, and that the law ſhould proceed in its regular courſe on the

the full and, as I ſuppoſed, ſufficient confeſſion of my guilt. The people around me looked much ſurpriſed, and wondered at my extraordinary conduct; but neither entreaties nor threats could wring the ſecret from me, or make me ſpeak of the wrongs of my wife. I found it impoſſible to touch on a theme like that; my ſoul revolted at it. I was conſequently ſent to the priſon, and lodged in a dungeon, in order to take my trial for the murder of Salvini.

The legal thieves robbed me of all my money; they however allowed me to retain a few papers, which were to them unimportant, and, in ſpite of their ſagacity, I concealed from them a miniature of Roſolie. It was very richly ſet with diamonds; but to me the moſt valuable part was the painting, ſo truly like, ſo juſtly reſembling my dear, my beloved wife! My heart beat with

with pleaſure when the keeper left my cell without diſcovering my treaſure, which I immediately hid within an aperture of one of the walls in the darkeſt corner of the priſon room.—Trifles ſometimes will alleviate the pangs of the wretched, particularly if ſenſibility has a diſtinguiſhed claim upon their hearts; and *my heart* was cheered, was ſolaced by the idea of carrying the picture of my murdered wife in my fond boſom to the ſcaffold, where the rack would probably cruſh it with my exiſtence; but I frequently went to the place of its concealment, took it from thence, placed it for a moment in the ſtrongeſt light which the narrow grate afforded, and caſting my eyes upon it for an inſtant, depoſited it again, leſt I might be ſurpriſed, and loſe it. Oh memory! thou haſt more pains than pleaſures, more curſes than delights!

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The man whom I had ſnatched from the wheel, was likely ſoon to recover; and though he had acknowledged himſelf a thief, his puniſhment was deemed ſufficient, and he was therefore diſcharged. Previous to his leaving the priſon, he was admitted into my cell; he inſtantly knew me, but did not vent a ſingle reproach. I expreſſed the ſorrow that I really felt for having been the cauſe of his diſgrace and ſufferings, entreated him to forgive me for it, and aſſured him that, previous to my death, I would give directions for every poſſible reparation to be made to him by one of my ſurviving friends.

I wiſhed for a ſpeedy trial, and was gratified; for after paſſing a fortnight in my dungeon, I was brought before my judges. As I had directed, the three witneſſes whom I had named, were in the court. One of

them ſtated my purchaſe of the piſtols and ſtiletto; another proved my abſence from his houſe during all the night in which the murder was committed; and the laſt, the female cottager, who now looked on me moſt expreſſively, ſpoke of my being in the village, and repeated the converſation I had held with her in the early part of the day.

Having perſiſted in concealing my motives for killing Salvini, and ſolemnly repeated my former confeſſion of my guilt, a ſentence ſimilar to that of the former unfortunate culprit was paſſed upon me.

I roſe, and bowed to the man who had pronounced it.

"I hear your decree with calmneſs," I cried; "I ſhudder not at it, for death brings to me no terrors, no apprehenſions. I have performed my duty in acknowledging the deed; you have done the ſame in condemning

condemning me for the perpetration of it. I know the eyes of every perſon around me view me as a monſter; I know that thoſe who ſhall witneſs my diſſolution, will direct to me their ſcorn, and load me with opprobrium. Let them; ſtill will I indulge the privilege of ſecrecy;—not one of thoſe curious machines, which are made to give an exquiſite ſenſe to torture, ſhall make me cry out—'Spare me, and I will confeſs.' Regard me not for this declaration as a hardened villain; indeed I am not ſuch, nor have I ever deſerved ſo harſh an appellation; but if my heart were to feel the leaſt repugnance for what my hands have done, thoſe very hands ſhould afterwards be employed in tearing it from my breaſt. Oh! I *could* tell a tale, that fathers, huſbands, mothers, wives, nay, even children would weep at, which would diſſolve the moſt inflexible heart,

heart, and make my cenſurers pitiers. Oh, it horrid! but my firmneſs is affected. If there be a hell, Salvini's ſoul is in the midſt of it; and as there is a heaven, I fear not but that I, ere long, ſhall diſcover it. Lead me to my dungeon!"

I ſaw tears, and heard ſobbings, and my judges looked mildly on me as I left the court.

Having regained my cell, I became more compoſed; and by the time that my chain was adjuſted, and my door ſecured, my heart was conſiderably leſs agitated.

I had ſeven days to live; had they been only hours, I ſhould have been happier. Conſidering my ſituation, I was not treated inhumanly, nor loaded with ſuperfluous fetters; my gaoler, indeed, uſed precaution in ſecuring me, but he did not want to weigh my body down with irons. I regarded him

him with no malignity or ſeverity for what he did; on the contrary, I ſpoke mildly, and ſometimes gratefully to him. I did not obſtinately reject the food he brought to me, though I was ſcarcely ſenſible of the quality or flavour of it; and, at my earneſt interceſſion, he ſupplied me with materials for writing.

After ſome reflections, and they indeed were ſerious ones, I began to write an account of what I had hitherto concealed, which I knew would be ſoon fully corroborated by my friend Alberti. Had I wiſhed for life, there was a great probability of obtaining a pardon, as the evidence of Alberti and Lucilla would have confirmed my ſtatement of circumſtances, and, in a great degree, tended to remove my criminality; but breathing being oppreſſive to me, and my ſoul longing for a ſtate of eternal quiet,

I only

I only hoped that my situation would remain unknown to my beſt worldly friend until my fate was decided on the ſcaffold; Any interpoſition on his part would have afflicted me greatly, and his preſence would certainly have overpowered me and all my fortitude.

Two days paſſed away, and no perſon appeared before me, except the gaoler and the Confeſſor who attended the condemned of the priſon. The kindneſs of the former I returned with gratitude, as it was truly exemplary; but the latter I diſmiſſed, having firſt aſſured him, though not with the tone of rudeneſs, that I never had entertained a favourable opinion of receiving any benefit in telling to a Prieſt what I feared, or was diſinclined to avow to all my fellows of the earth. This put him to flight; and it was evident that the churl conſidered me

as

as doomed to perdition, not merely for the crime for which I was manacled, but alſo for my hereſy and diſbelief of the powers and virtues of his function.—"Go thy ways, gloomy and dark-browed Monk!" I ſaid, as he went in anger from my cell; "I ſhall not truſt my cauſe with thee; while I can appeal to God myſelf, I will employ no other perſon to do it in my behalf."

I ſtill continued to write, and the time to paſs; four of the ſeven days had gone over, and preparations were making for the cloſing one. My narrative, painful as the taſk was, was carried on regularly till I came to account for the murder of Salvini. There I pauſed, and fell into a train of reflections which ſurpriſed even myſelf; for they were ſubverſive of all the principles that I had been endeavouring to eſtabliſh, and of the fortitude that I had been implanting.

I entered

I entered into ſelf-argument. Dying on the wheel had now ſome weight with me, and I began to lothe the idea of going out of the world amidſt curſes and execrations; and there appeared ſomething truly horrid in having my lacerated body held forth in a diſguſting manner to public view.

Theſe ideas oppreſſed me, and I found that I had been a boaſter and an hypocrite; for, though I feared not death, I ſhrank from the idea of my marrow being preſſed out of my ſplintered bones. I laid down my pen, and ſighed to think that I could not have the privilege of rotting in the earth. Afterwards, however, I endeavoured to baniſh theſe weak thoughts; but it was impoſſible; my ſtability was ſhaken, and my fortitude not to be again raiſed.

Night came on, and I was involved in darkneſs, the uſe of a lamp being denied me;

me; the priſon was growing ſilent, and I heard only a faint noiſe, which I ſuppoſed to be occaſioned by the rats in the earth. I hoped to recover my ſtrength of reſolution before the morning, but could make no immediate progreſs in it; my food and hard bed were neglected, and I ſat on my ſtone ſeat till the clock ſtruck twelve.

I was growing faint with my ideas. "Muſt I, indeed," I exclaimed aloud, "die with torture and ignominy for the extirpation of ſuch a villain?"

"Can you be brave?" ſaid a voice; "if ſo, live and be at liberty."

Starting, I enquired who it was that thus ſtrangely addreſſed me.

"A friend who will ſerve you," was the anſwer.

"Where? In my dungeon?"

"No, a mole beneath it. Be honeſt, be firm! Halloo! your help here. Huſh! the watch! the watch!"

I heard a noiſe under the floor, but ſilence ſucceeded, and I remained in amazement for the ſpace of half an hour, when the inviſible again addreſſed me, and immediately after I ſaw a faint gleam of light, and alſo one of the broad ſtones, with which my dungeon was paved, lifted up by degrees, and at length carefully removed.

A tall man raiſed himſelf from the hole, and allowing his lanthorn to give a greater light, he approached me, and ſmiling, tendered me his hand. Amazement ſtill poſſeſſed me, and my eyes were fixed on the face of the ſtranger, who was a young man, poſſeſſing much grace and beauty.

"You are ſentenced to die, Signor?" he ſaid.

"I am within a few days to die," I replied.

"And

"And it is repugnant to you?" he ſaid, ſmiling. "Well, I allow it is not unnatural."

"To die by the hands of a common executioner is indeed repugnant to me."

"Damned be he who attempts to cruſh you," he exclaimed; "but this place ſuits not vehemence. I think, Signor, for I have heard ſomething of your character—I think to the man who is, and wiſhes to prove himſelf your friend, that you could be——"

"*A friend.* I could—I ſwear it!"

"It is enough. Sincerity (I am no fool of compliments) has finely drawn her lines upon your countenance; I will confide in you, and account for my ſtrange appearance. I have been confined in an adjoining cell upwards of ſeven months; and it was on the condition of breathing the purity of its air for the term of ſeven years, which

you will allow is a conſiderable gap in a man's life, that the dogs of Milan reſtrained their agents from pulling me piecemeal for the amuſement of a ſight-loving populace.

"I was accuſed of having ſpoken certain words againſt the Senate, or the Viceroy, or the houſe of—— But a truce with accuſations: Patriots have in all ages bled; even traitors have been known to demand—aye, and to *receive* the badge of honour. A niggardly villain, a thief of confidence, put me into the hands of juſtice, as it is called, and being declared guilty of the imputed charges, ſentence was immediately paſſed on me; and though it was afterwards mitigated, I had, in a filthy priſon, to bear the heats of ſeven ſummers, the colds of as many winters, to feaſt on the blood-correcting aliments, and either to walk or to dance,

dance, as my fancy might direct me, within the circle allowed by, and to the muſic of, my own chains.

"Signor! my buoyant ſpirits were not to be depreſſed. In my captivity my heart beat nobly, and I was as great as any of the ephemera, whom I was accuſed of having ſlandered; and my mind was not impriſoned, for it wandered from ſyſtem to ſyſtem, and dwelt on preſent and on future proſpects. But hark! huſh! Did you not hear a noiſe? No, all is ſilent.

"My private hiſtory," he continued, "would not much intereſt you."

"You are deceived," I replied; "I ſhould attend to the relation of it with great earneſtneſs."

"Aye, but the time is unapt. I ſhall therefore only ſay that my father was a very eminent chemiſt:—he had imparted ſome of

his knowledge to me; and being allowed to retain a few of his books and manuſcripts in priſon, the gaining of further information in the art was my principal ſolace; and perhaps, at this moment, I am the poſſeſſor of ſuch myſteries as the ſtudents and practitioners of all Italy are unacquainted with. But more of this in another place.

"I was ſoon diſguſted with my confinement; but the prevention of liberty could not, as I ſaid before, affect the vigour of my mind: and though thick walls incloſed, and irons bound me, I meditated an eſcape. For the firſt three months no perſon, except the gaoler, was allowed to enter my dungeon; but as I behaved with what the men of power called propriety, I was afterwards allowed to throw my arms, and with them my chains, around the necks of ſuch friends as had not forgotten me. You will probably

bably ſmile when I tell you that my moſt conſtant viſiter was a woman; not my daughter—I am too young; not my wife—I never was married. It was a woman who lived with and loved me; not by the rules of duty and obedience, but by thoſe of free paſſions and affections—a woman whoſe mind and body correſponded intimately with my own. Think me not an egot for the laſt words that I ſpoke, if I add to them, ſhe was a noble creature, rivalled by none of ancient—equalled, I believe, by none of modern times—one who could *almoſt*, (I do not ſay *wholly*) Signor, with her own hands, lay her heart a ſacrifice on the altar of friendſhip. Brave woman! excellent creature!

" Pardon me for theſe flights, and do not think me hyperbolical. She bore me two boys at a birth. Oh! could you but ſee

the fire of their little eyes, and the early expreſſion of their plaſtic features! In each of them I behold an epitome of greatneſs. May the winds of proſperity blow on them in their youth, and Glory become their patroneſs when they ſhall go into the world as men!—as men of ſtrength, of zeal, and of enterpriſe; not as puppets in fantoccini, nor as Italian macaroni, grinning in pocket mirrors, and acquiring ſhrill voices at the expence of their manhood.

"Apollonia curſed the rigour of my judges as much as I did; ſhe was not in the habit of weeping and ſwooning—a habit which many of her ſex adopt in the very moments when reſolution is moſt requiſite, and which mere chagrin or petulance will often draw them into; but ſhe felt not the leſs for my ſituation, and my chains wounded her as much as myſelf. By her ingenuity, however,

however, I was enabled to lighten them; for unbraiding her fine hair one day, ſhe took from under it a couple of ſmall files, with which I made niches in my irons juſt large enough to paſs the links. This was a ſtep towards freedom;—I knew the hours of my gaoler's viſits; whenever he came, therefore, he found me apparently confined, and placed in a correſponding attitude; but in his abſence I was the free ranger of my realm. I was alſo as unbroken in my ſpirit as the rewarded patriot who brought me to my preſent ſtate, and whoſe body, ſhould I ever hereafter meet with him, I will, or may I become more deſpicable than a dog that grubs in alleys!——but whither am I going?—I will damn him, and then return!

"The ſame dear and friendly hand that had furniſhed me with the files, ſupplied me with ſeveral other ſmall implements, and

likewiſe pointed out a place to conceal them in; for ſhe had as many projects as a miniſter, but they were of a more worthy nature.

"With ſome difficulty we raiſed a ſtone, and to our ſurpriſe found a hollow ſpace beneath it; I did not then enter it, but put the covering carefully over it, as I intended to reſerve my obſervations till ſome fitter ſeaſon. Apollonia, however, as well as myſelf, was anxious to know how it terminated, and ardently wiſhed that it might lead me to liberty.

"Having diſcovered this depoſitory, Apollonia, on the following day, brought me ſome phoſphorus, a ſmall lanthorn, and matches, and the enſuing midnight I deſcended into the paſſage, which, to my mortification, I found only of the length of a few feet, and its depth was very inconſiderable.

able. The bubbles of hope burſt, and for a few moments I was extremely chagrined; the depreſſion, however, was of no long date, and I laughed over the matter when I again ſaw my noble-minded aſſociate. Liberty! I ſtill panted for liberty! and in order to obtain it, I entered into an arduous and fatiguing undertaking, which was to divert the courſe of the paſſage, and to turn it towards the court that fronted the door of my cell. If I were to be diſcovered in this attempt, ſhould I not be puniſhed with the utmoſt ſeverity, removed to a dungeon ſtill more damp and ugly, drag many additional chains, and be deprived of the ſight and converſe of my faithful Apollonia? I deſiſted for a moment after thus thinking. But if I were *not* diſcovered, might I not regain the bliſsful freedom for which I panted, laugh at the envious dupes of

Milan, make myſelf as free as the eagle, and range the wide world with my adventurous heroine and my precious little ones. Excellent and invigorating thoughts! I began to work, having previouſly formed a bolder deſign; and after labouring, like Hercules, nearly thirty nights, unaſſiſted by neceſſary implements, I made my way to the yard, which I can now enter by ſinking a ſlight covering of earth.

"And now, Signor, for my grand project, which I have only diſtantly hinted to you. Dare you make a bold ſtruggle for liberty?"

"I dare. But how to obtain it? the means?"

"By firing this infernal priſon, and eſcaping in the tumult it will occaſion."

"What! endanger the lives of thoſe who are in confinement? of thoſe who hope for pardon? of thoſe to whom it may, even

at

at the moment of your attempt, be actually granted? of thoſe who have wives and little children waiting in tearful expectation at the grate, and perhaps looking for the huſband and father while we are plotting their deſtruction?"

"No, no! my life on it that the gates and doors will be inſtantly thrown open, and that the emancipation will be general."

"If I thought ſo, indeed——"

"Aſſure yourſelf of it. Your ſcruples I would remove; yet may I periſh if I do not reverence you for your humanity!"

"But how accompliſh this? The fire, I apprehend, muſt be partial and confined; ſuch an one, perhaps, as our gaoler will be able to ſmother with a blanket, or quench with a ſingle bucket of water."

"There you are deceived; it ſhall be wide and terrible. I have already told you

that my father was an extraordinary chemiſt; and I am the poſſeſſor of a ſecret art of conflagration, which nothing could ever tempt me to diſcloſe. I will undertake to make a glorious blaze! What ſay you? Enterpriſe or death?"

"Enterpriſe! enterpriſe! I feel my heart glowing. To eſcape the monſter that is preparing to gape for me, I will attempt any thing which you may boldly deviſe—I ſwear I will, rather than yield myſelf to his jaws, which never till now looked terrible."

"Bravo! if we do not ſucceed, we ſhall both die, but not upon a wheel! I have a dagger, and will uſe it; here is one for you, too, if you are inclined to apply it. Never ſtretch—ſtab rather than ſtretch! At the hour of twelve to-morrow night the ſtruggle ſhall begin;—but let me diſincumber you of theſe irons. Would I could twiſt

twiſt them round the necks of ſome of the Milaneſe, and with them mount their carcaſes to gibbets nothing below the regions which the eagles, that might pull from their bones the bloated fleſh which covers them, beſt love to ſhriek and wheel in!

He began to file my fetters, and in the courſe of half an hour, owing to his extraordinary dexterity, I found myſelf unreſtrained. I was cautioned by him, however, to affix the links properly in the morning, and alſo to be prepared for the viſit of the gaoler.

"And now," ſaid I, "inform me whether you know any thing of the man whom you appear ſo willing to befriend? any thing reſpecting his condemnation—his crimes?"

"I have been informed that you are a murderer."

"And

"And you ſtill can ſerve me? ſtill wiſh to preſerve me?"

"I can—I do. When I firſt heard your accuſation—"Let him go to the hell which he ought to burn in!" I exclaimed; "but when your conduct at your trial was repreſented to me, it pleaſed me; I pitied your ſituation, and admired your ſpirit; and recollecting my former impetuous ſpeech, I not only blamed myſelf, but alſo curſed the raſhneſs of my tongue. Afterwards, for I had curioſity to ſpur me on, I overheard your nightly lamentations, and ſcraps of a ſtory, which I deemed to be truly lamentable, though I could poſſibly form no diſtinct ideas of it. Commiſeration grew within me while you were perfectly a ſtranger to me; but when I looked upon your face, Signor, I could no longer believe that you were literally a murderer, or that you had,

through

through mere ſavageneſs, ſtirred up the hot blood of a human creature with a cold and deliberate hand."

"Look at this picture," I ſaid, taking the miniature of Roſolie from my boſom, and holding it near the lamp.

"Oh, how ſweet! how lovely!" he exclaimed; "and whom does it reſemble, Signor?"

"My wife; nor is there a line of flattery in it. She was indeed ſweet! ſhe was indeed lovely!"

"She *was*! Ah! then ſhe is——"

"Dead! gone from me for ever! I would not ſpeak of her before my judges; but you are a rare and uncommon friend, deſerving of all confidence. You know that I killed a man of the name of S lvini; this ruffian defiled the temple of chaſtity; he bore my wife from me, not ſeduced, but forcibly deprived

deprived her of her honour! She ſickened of grief, and died!"

"I cannot—dare I believe it?"

"By all that's holy and divine it is true! Now, without detailing any more of the horrid circumſtance, tell me what the perpetrator of a crime like this deſerved?"

"To be murdered cruelly; and, if it were poſſible, to be reſtored again to life, afterwards to ſuffer a thouſand, nay, an hundred thouſand lingering deaths. But you have chilled my blood. Unhappy man! miſerable priſoner! my heart's ſtream is overflowing for your ſufferings! but droop not—ſink not at a moment like this. I muſt not ſuffer you wholly to unman me. Good night, my new acquaintance and confederate, for I have much buſineſs to perform before the morning, in which you can be of no ſervice to me. My name is Pietro Arpino;

Arpino; and I am your friend, or may the clouds ſmother me! but if I lead you to liberty, Apollonia will be more entitled to your thanks than myſelf. Adieu! hold yourſelf in readineſs to-morrow night, when Captivity ſhall growl for the loſs of her victims, and the atmoſphere of Milan be illuminated by the red flames burſting from this abominable peſt-houſe."

He ſhook my hand, and deſcended.

I replaced the ſtone with great care, and then ſat down in aſtoniſhment, almoſt doubting the reality of what had paſſed. The enterpriſe of Arpino I did not think would ſucceed; but I looked upon the dagger with pleaſure, and treaſured it as a friend that would ſnatch me from torture and diſgrace.

On the character and principles of my fellow-priſoner I could not at that time think

think deeply; I ſaw enough of him, however, to excite curioſity and ſurpriſe, and he evidently was an extraordinary man. His perſon ſhewed a hero, for it was noble and beautiful; the vigour of his mind diſplayed itſelf conſpicuouſly, and his firmneſs and courage I believed to be very great.

The dark hours went over, and on the following day I thought myſelf a ſucceſsful hypocrite; for I aſſumed an habit of melancholy, and not only talked of my execution with dejection, but alſo, as evening drew on, begged that the Confeſſor might appear again the next morning, in order to take the burthen off my conſcience, which I now found too dreadful and weighty. My commiſerating gaoler withdrew. Collecting my papers, I put them in my boſom; and as the night further advanced, took off my chains,

chains, and watched for the appearance of Arpino.

At half paſt eleven he removed the ſtone, and giving me a ſqueeze, and whiſpering, "Silence," motioned me to follow him through the cavity, which I accordingly did, and almoſt immediately after found myſelf in his cell, where his ſecret apparatus and ſmall inſtruments were placed.

"I have no time for talking," he ſaid, in a low tone of voice; "I do not abſolutely promiſe you liberty; but remember my preſent. If we ſucceed, we ſhall probably never meet again. Apollonia and my boys, my little unfledged eaglets, are removed to ſome conſiderable diſtance from Milan, and I ſhall ſtrive to join them. Signor, you may want money; here is a purſe for you, roughly, but freely given. The oil of compliments hangs not upon my tongue; and having

having been left to the tuition of Nature, the graces of ſpeaking came not within the rules of my education. If you eſcape theſe walls, hide yourſelf in the ſuburbs till the morning, when you may eaſily paſs the gates of the city; afterwards every thing will depend on your activity. But now to action; remain quiet till my return; if I am intercepted, God bleſs you!"

He collected his inſtruments; dipped ſeveral ſmall balls of flax into a liquid; and putting his lanthorn under his clothes, diſappeared.

I was diſturbed by the moſt violent emotions, and in momentary expectation of ſeeing Arpino dragged back to his cell. After an abſence, however, of nearly half an hour, he returned, and with exultation told me that the building was on fire in three different parts. The noiſe and confuſion

ſuſion that ſoon followed, affirmed what he ſaid to be true; the aſſiſtants of the priſon were running diſorderedly about the yard, and the bell announced the circumſtance to the city.

Arpino took me by the arm, and ſoon after brought me into an open ſpace, where the flames met my eye, and made me tremble at their violence and terrifying aſpect. The tumult increaſed, and the noiſe of the populace, aſſembled before the priſon, was very loud; but we thought it proper to retire a few minutes to our hiding-place till there were more people admitted within the walls. A conſiderable number was almoſt immediately after hurrying backward and forward, when we again ventured forth, and joined them, regardleſs of the probable conſequences of our temerity. It was not a fit ſeaſon to liſten to the voice of Caution,

and

and neither of us ſeemed inclined to attend to her.

I was ſoon ſeparated from Arpino; and, expecting every moment to be arreſted by the gaoler, or ſome other perſon, I graſped my dagger firmly; and after a ſhort ſpace of time, being ſeized with conſiderable force by the arm, I was applying the point of it to my breaſt.

"Roncorone! Roncorone!" cried Arpino.

"Is it you?" I ſaid; "is it Arpino?"

"Are you mad?" he exclaimed, ſtill graſping me, "are you mad? Here, take this bucket; follow bravely; imitate my actions, and repeat my words. Inſtant freedom, or inſtant death for me! Come on! come on!——"Fire! fire! water! water!"

I kept at his heels, and made the ſame outcry as he did, in which we were joined by

by many more voices. We paſſed the gates!

"It is done! it is accompliſhed!" cried Arpino; "bold was the attempt, and glorious is its ſucceſs! God bleſs you in every after-day! We muſt part inſtantly—God bleſs you!"

He broke from me; but I firſt graſped his hands, and let a tear of gratitude fall on them. What his fate afterwards was I know not; he however eſcaped from the city, on which I have grounded good hopes. According to his direction, I did not attempt to leave Milan till the break of day, when I paſſed the gates of the town, and walked undauntedly on, but ſtill retaining the dagger of Arpino as a ſecurity againſt the power of any purſuers.

I had no means of diſguiſing myſelf: at the firſt village I came to I purchaſed

a horſe (for the purſe which Arpino had given me was plentifully ſtored), and mounting him, ſet off with ſpeed, ſcarcely ſtopping an hour at any place till I reached the banks of the Lake of Maggiore, which I croſſed, having previouſly diſpoſed of my brute preſerver.

I was happy to learn, by public report, that, though the greater part of the priſon had been reduced by the flames, not a ſingle perſon ſuffered in the conflagration. The names of Arpino and Roncorone were ſpoken of with terror; for the diſcovery of ſome of my friend's apparatus in his abandoned cell, and alſo of the paſſage that communicated to my dungeon, had betrayed to the keeper of the priſon the principal actor and agent in this cunningly contrived buſineſs.

Large rewards, I heard, were offered for the apprehending of the incendiaries; when,

in order to make greater my ſecurity, I procured a diſguiſe, in which I journied on with caution, and at length reached the Valais; and, ſeeking a retired and unfrequented ſpot, became fearleſs of the hand of power, and unſuſpecting of malice and ſtratagem.

What had I to do with men and ſociety? Nothing. I had no mind to inform, no wit to charm, no ſuavity to pleaſe. On my own privacy I grounded my ſecurity; and callous as the depravity of the world had made my heart, ſtill it would frequently ſoften at the ſimplicity and kindneſs of my untutored fellows.

* * * * * *

I have done:—God, whoſe ſpirits now whiſper in the elements, knows what the ſufferings of my ſoul have been, and what they now are. The total ſuppreſſion of my

a horſe
me v
him
ho
th
i

ed, and the mi-
ſelon will ſpeedily ter-
I, who once poſſeſſed bodily har-
now enervated; ſickneſs accom-
and the fierceneſs of my mind
by dejection. Oh calamity!
known enough of thee!

One of the honeſt natives has been endea-
to win my favour, and he has ſuc-
; he wants to alleviate my diſtreſſes,
ooth my afflictions, and to make me an
of the little dwelling of which he is
maſter. He deſires not to know my
ſtory; he ſees that I am a creature of mi-
ſery, and with tears in his eyes—(breeds ſuch
ſympathy in cities?)—entreats me to live
with him, and to enlarge his family of peace.
To live! and, living, to be at peace! Ah!
friend——

Good

Good ſon of Nature! beneficent fellow-man! before I die, I will bleſs you a thouſand and a thouſand times. God protect the woman who ſleeps within your arms; and proſper the children that have ſucked at her breaſt! You have a little vineyard; may its fruit be tenfold! Envying not the ſons of power, you look calmly on your ſpots of paſturage; gentle be the dews that deſcend on them! Long and proſperous days, a placid death, and a fair after-name be your reward, mild, charitable, and unoffending ſtranger!

* * * * * *

I became nearly two months ago a reſident in the little farm; but I feel that I am about to leave it for ever. I ſhall be buried with decency: I have already choſen my reſting place, and the children ſay that, if

I die, "they will plant pretty flowers around my grave."

I crawled out yeſterday, in order that the free air might blow upon me. An unexpected ſtorm aroſe, but it was ſucceeded by a lovely calm;—the violence of the one I compared to the ſtruggles of death; the ſerenity of the other to the ſtate of immortality; and in the craving of my ſoul I ſtretched forth my almoſt fleſhleſs arms to the cloud-enveloped ſpirit.

Alberti!—dear friend, I die!—Bleſs you and your wife!—Protect the orphan, and remember thoſe who have, in ſome degree, ſoothed the agonies of the dying Roncorone. Take to your notice the friendly little boy whom I have mentioned before, and who ſaw me yeſterday probably for the laſt time. Roſolie, ere the ſun goes behind yon mountain, we ſhall ſurely meet. My eyes are

miſty

misty—ſtill your form is not imperfect.—Partner! wife! ſpirit!—Oh!——

Information to the Reader.

Roncorone never renewed his narrative; two days after this abrupt breaking-off, he purged his mind and body of their afflictions; and on the fifth ſubſequent to his death, the latter was given to the earth, under the direction of the humane ruſtic of the Valais, who afterwards took poſſeſſion of the papers which the deceaſed had left behind him. This man, in the courſe of a few weeks, depoſited the writings with a gentleman of Geneva, to whom he alſo gave the following ſhort account of the unfortunate Venetian, and of his laſt moments.—

"His firſt appearance amongſt us excited great curioſity, and in a ſhort time his

general manners and deportment created a conſiderable degree of terror in ſome of my neighbours, who diſtinguiſhed him by the name of the "Mad Man of the Mountain." He at firſt took poſſeſſion of a poor little hut that belonged to a vintager, of whom he purchaſed the ſcanty things which were in the houſe: his reſidence there, however, was only temporary; for the greater part of his time was ſpent in a rude cavern, of which the people of theſe parts have always been fearful. He was fond of the heights, and ſeldom came down to our valley, except to procure the few ſimple neceſſaries of life; and even then his words were very few, and alſo very ſtrange.

"The firſt time I ſaw him, I both loved and pitied him. His face was beautiful, his perſon noble; and, ah, my God! when he was not wild, his ſighs were ſo hollow,

and

and his eyes ſo mournful, that I have often gone home to my family with a very heavy and afflicted heart.

" I once carried a ſmall baſket of fruit to him, and entreated him to accept of it;—he regarded me with fixed looks, which confuſed me, aſking me at the ſame time whether I came to betray him; and then, as if recollecting himſelf, he took me by the hand, and thanked me for my ſimple preſent. I afterwards drew him to my little farm. Sometimes I could not underſtand his language, and I ſuſpected him to be actually mad, as my neighbours reported him; but, at other periods, his words delighted my ear, and the ſoft tones of his voice ſeemed almoſt to draw my ſoul from me.

" My daughter Liſette and myſelf were the only perſons with whom he would, for any

any length of time, patiently converſe; and unhappy were we when we ſaw him roving, melancholy and heedleſs, over the brow of the mountain, or wandering, during a ſtorm, through the lonely paths of the valley.

" Ah! how my heart has bled—how the eyes of Liſette have wept for the poor unhappy ſtranger, who at length ſeemed wholly to deſert our houſe, and to hide himſelf from every eye! At the riſk of raiſing his anger, we ventured to go to him: we found him pale and drooping; and, Oh God! the looks of famine were in his face. It was evident that he had long abſtained from food. He was weak, thin, and ſallow!

" As I ſuſpected, he was at firſt diſpleaſed, and deſired us to retire; but, endeavouring to make myſelf known to him, I urged him to go home, and to reſide with

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me and Liſette till health and happineſs ſhould again return to him. He anſwered me with a look which, I muſt confeſs, half frightened me, and with a moſt unſeaſonable and very unnatural laugh; but he afterwards gave me a refuſal, though he accepted of ſome proviſion that I had brought with me. About a fortnight after this ſhocking diſcovery I ſucceeded in getting him to my houſe; but I ſaw that his life was haſtily fading.

"He was now leſs wild, but more melancholy; though he talked but little with us, his looks were generally kind and tender; and if we attempted to ſooth or cheer him, he would water our hands with his burſts of tears. The marriage of my dear Liſette greatly affected him. On receiving the little bridal preſents, his agony increaſed, and on hearing the ſtrains of the flagelet,

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he haſtily retired. Poor Liſette was ſorry to ſee ſo much miſery; ſhe went after him, and, burſting into tears, aſked whether he did not wiſh her happineſs?—'God ſend it you till the day of your death!" he exclaimed, "even till the laſt moment of your exiſtence!'—He took her in his arms, kiſſed her, and then delivered her to her huſband, who had followed her.

"In the evening I prevented him from committing an act of ſuicide; I arreſted his uplifted arm, and in the name of God charged him to deſiſt.—'God!' he repeated, 'God!'—He ſunk on his knees, and the weapon with which he had armed himſelf, fell from his palſied hand.

"His time was but ſhort after this occurrence; theſe arms ſupported him in death; theſe hands cloſed his eyes! That my heart was grieved is true, but unneceſſary to repeat.

repeat. He ſpoke of a friend, and of his wife—of his murdered wife! He ſeemed to hold ſtrange dialogues with her, and talked of her as long as he could give motion to his lips. I know no more, and this I have found too ſad for a weak old man. Though he be with God, I ſhall long mourn for him; humanity directed my actions towards the poor ſtranger, affection gave them force, and his grave muſt become an old object before it fails to excite ſorrow."

The perſon to whom the peaſant delivered the papers, was a man of underſtanding and compaſſion;—his firſt care was to forward intelligence of Roncorone's death to Alberti; who, on receiving it, haſtened to Geneva, where he learned the wretched end of his beſt beloved friend, and almoſt brother, of whom he had endeavoured,

during a ſpace of ſeveral months, to obtain ſome information: but the narrative he received, convinced him that there were ſeverer pangs for the heart than any which he had before been aware of.

On his return to Venice he removed many ſtigmas from the memory of Roncorone, and taught thouſands to pity his fate who had hitherto curſed his crimes. Compaſſion no longer reſted on the name of Salvini; infamy was attached to it; and his tomb at Venice, to which place his body had been conveyed from Milan with great funereal pomp, was regarded as the cave of a fiend, rather than as the reſting-place of a Saint.

Some of the more rigid Seculars endeavoured to prove Alberti's unfortunate friend a criminal deſerving of reprobation; but their malice was impotent, their arguments inconcluſive,

inconcluſive, and their churliſhneſs reviled at. Whoever mentioned the name of Roncorone, added, "Peace to his ſoul! peace to the aſhes of his wife!"

FINIS.

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